

Nov. 30-Dec. 13, 2015

Baltimore After Freddie Gray

A laboratory of
urban violence
By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

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NY MAG



'The Big Short,'
with
Ryan Gosling,
will make
you furious
all over
again
about 2008.
By Jessica
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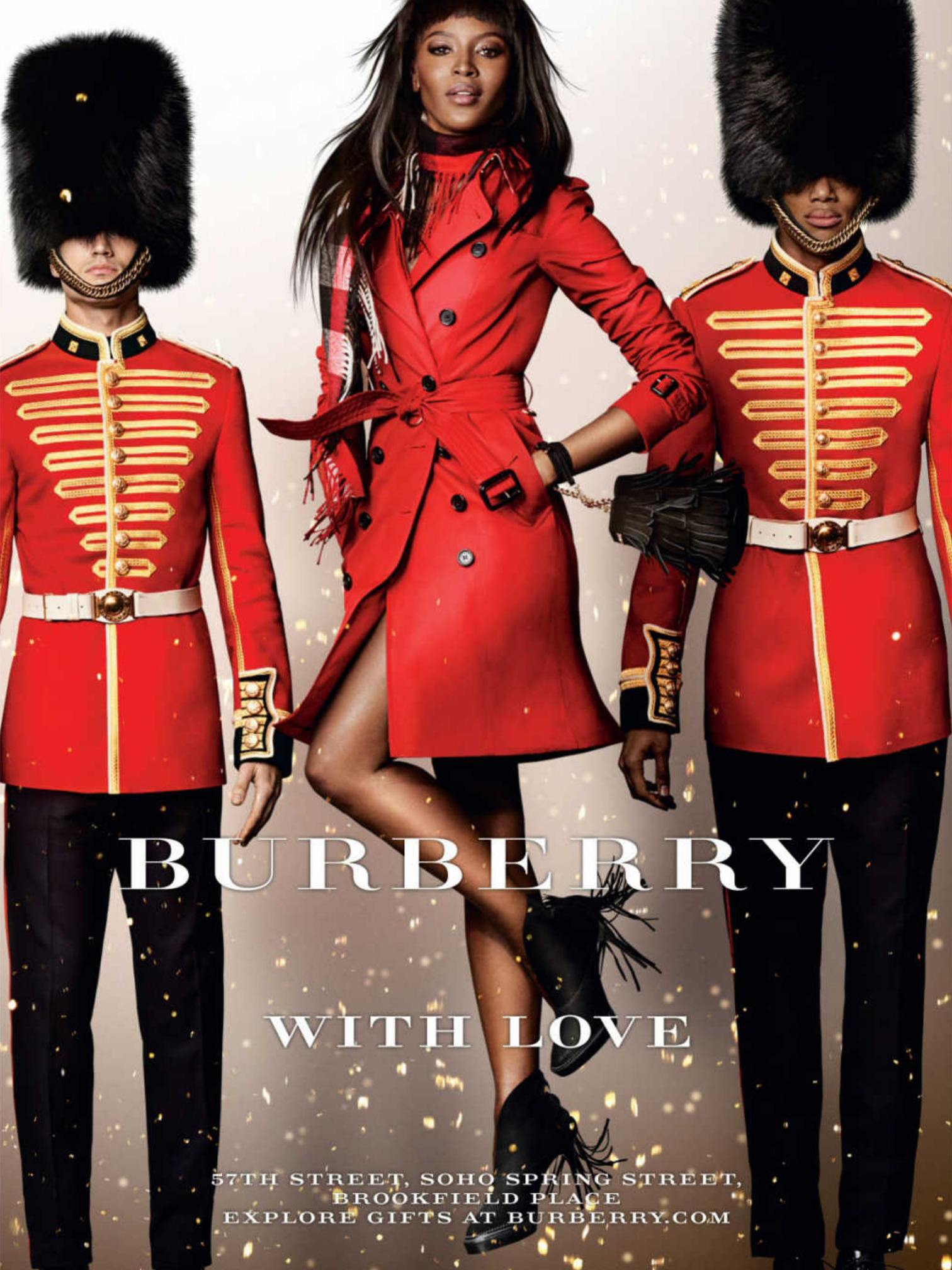
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*April 28, 2015,
in Baltimore,
soon after
Freddie Gray's
funeral.*

NEW YORK

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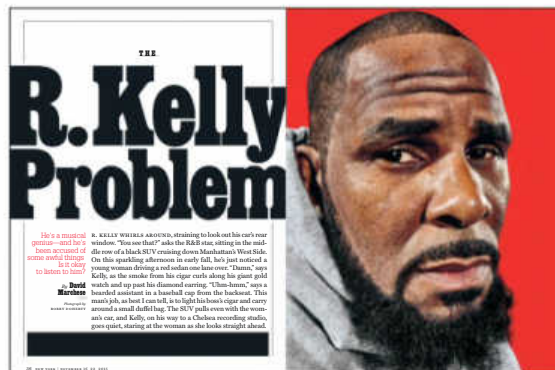
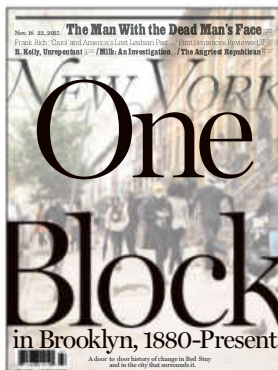
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1 The recent cover story took readers on “a historical journey through life on one stretch of Bed-Stuy’s MacDonough Street, a block that, like Brooklyn itself, has seen massive change” (**“1 Block, 135 Years,” November 16–22**). The block’s 135-year history was captured online using multimedia storytelling, which allowed readers to explore interviews with current and former residents as well as other pieces of the block’s history, including Census and property-record data, photographs, even a recipe. “The article does not end,” wrote Brownstoner’s Hannah Frishberg. **“The interviews can be read in any order, but a comprehension quickly forms in the mind of the reader** that these intimate profiles of area residents give a much fuller understanding of what it means to live in Brooklyn in 2015 than their property values.” “Some of what you’ll find is heartening,” wrote BrickUnderground’s Virginia K. Smith, “and some, hugely depressing, but if you want a clearer picture of 2015 Brooklyn than a Jimmy Kimmel parody or a widely reviled web series, click through to New York Magazine to play around with the full feature.” The Bed Stuy Blog wrote, **“You could probably spend the whole afternoon with this article ...** It offers quite the snapshot of a neighborhood that’s really shaped by the longtime home owners that have loved and lived in these brownstones for years.” Many residents of the neighborhood, both current and past, chimed in. “I lived, for years, five minutes walking from the Bed-Stuy block NYMag examined. So much of it rang true,” tweeted *The New Republic*’s Jamil Smith. “Fascinating how after all the gentrification, this beautiful neigh-

borhood in Bed-Stuy was less than 6% white in 2010,” tweeted BuzzFeed’s Tom Gara. “Really remarkable project offering a 360-degree view of change and stasis on one Bed-Stuy block,” tweeted the *Daily News*’s Josh Greenman. Many readers were enthralled by the multimedia components. “Love this opening door effect in NYMag’s piece on one block in Bed-Stuy,” tweeted Lena Groeger. **“I am loving NYMag’s One Block story, especially the coverage on Instagram. So good,”** tweeted Etsy’s Alison Feldmann. “Mouse over these autoplay videos and tell me you’re not entertained,” tweeted *Time* photo editor Josh Raab.

2 Steve Fishman told the story of Patrick Hardison, a firefighter severely injured in a blaze 14 years ago who this summer received the most extensive face transplant yet performed, from a 26-year-old Brooklyn man who died in a bicycle collision (**“Biography of a Face,” November 16–22**). The story led readers to **wonder about the future of face transplants.** “We link ourselves so much to our faces,” wrote mollysgaga. “When will be the first time that Hardison glances at a face in a mirror and realizes it is his?” Theocanada worried the practice would be misused. “They sort of hit on a horrible potential end result: Using this to restore youth. A 70 year old could just grab the face of a 20 year old. No more facelifts or fillers.” On Reddit’s Ask Me Anything forum, Fishman updated readers on Hardison’s recovery: “Patrick is headed home for Thanksgiving! Kind of remarkable. Three months after the operation. His speech is still garbled but he can’t wait to get back to the family and

what he thinks will be the beginning of a normal life. He placed a great deal of emphasis (and hope) on the prospect of a 'normal' life. His life will be filled with 'normal' things—like he'll be able to drive. But normal? Maybe not. And what is normal when you've got a new face and are on immunosuppressants for the rest of your life? ... It will be interesting to know how his hopes about reintegration will square with the reality."

3 "He's a musical genius—and he's been accused of some awful things. Is it still okay to listen to him?" asked David Marchese in his profile of R&B legend R. Kelly (**"The R. Kelly Problem," November 16–22**). Readers were divided. "100% yes," tweeted Jha Jha. "It's R. Kelly," agreed Ra's al Ghul. **"I haven't stopped and will never stop listening to R. Kelly,"** tweeted Tameka421. "He can literally do whatever he wants." "Plenty of other musicians have been scumbags like him, yet we play and love their music. Not everyone can be Springsteen," tweeted Christopher Chambers. Readers on the other side of the fence also expressed strong feelings on the issue. "This NY-Mag piece about R. Kelly is worth reading," tweeted *Paper* magazine's Jessica Jean Jardine. **"He's a monster** and it's awful he's yet to be truly held accountable." "I used to love R. Kelly's music, but personally find it hard to enjoy today," tweeted Donovan X. Ramsey. "[I have] very, very little time for hedging, dude-authored ambivalence that says 'we just listen to R. Kelly b/c we do,'" tweeted BuzzFeed's Anne Helen Petersen. **"It's a question you have to answer for yourself,"** tweeted BuzzFeed's Brandon Wall, "but for me the answer is resoundingly no." Other readers expressed their own ambivalence. "It's effed up," tweeted Maxcina Njoroge, "but yes, hear the #good this #madman has done. It reduces #impact of his #badsht!" During the interview, Kelly gave his own take on his reputation, saying he "understands the game. Get as much dirt as you can on somebody, get it all together, and make it real juicy so we can sell some papers." Jezebel's Clover Hope wrote that this was "R. Kelly once again being R. Kelly and figuring out how to flip media questions about his alleged predator habits into criticism of 'haters' that typically ends with religious references." Many readers just appreciated the artistic value of the profile itself. "Best music writing 2015," tweeted Jeremy D. Larson. "Game over."

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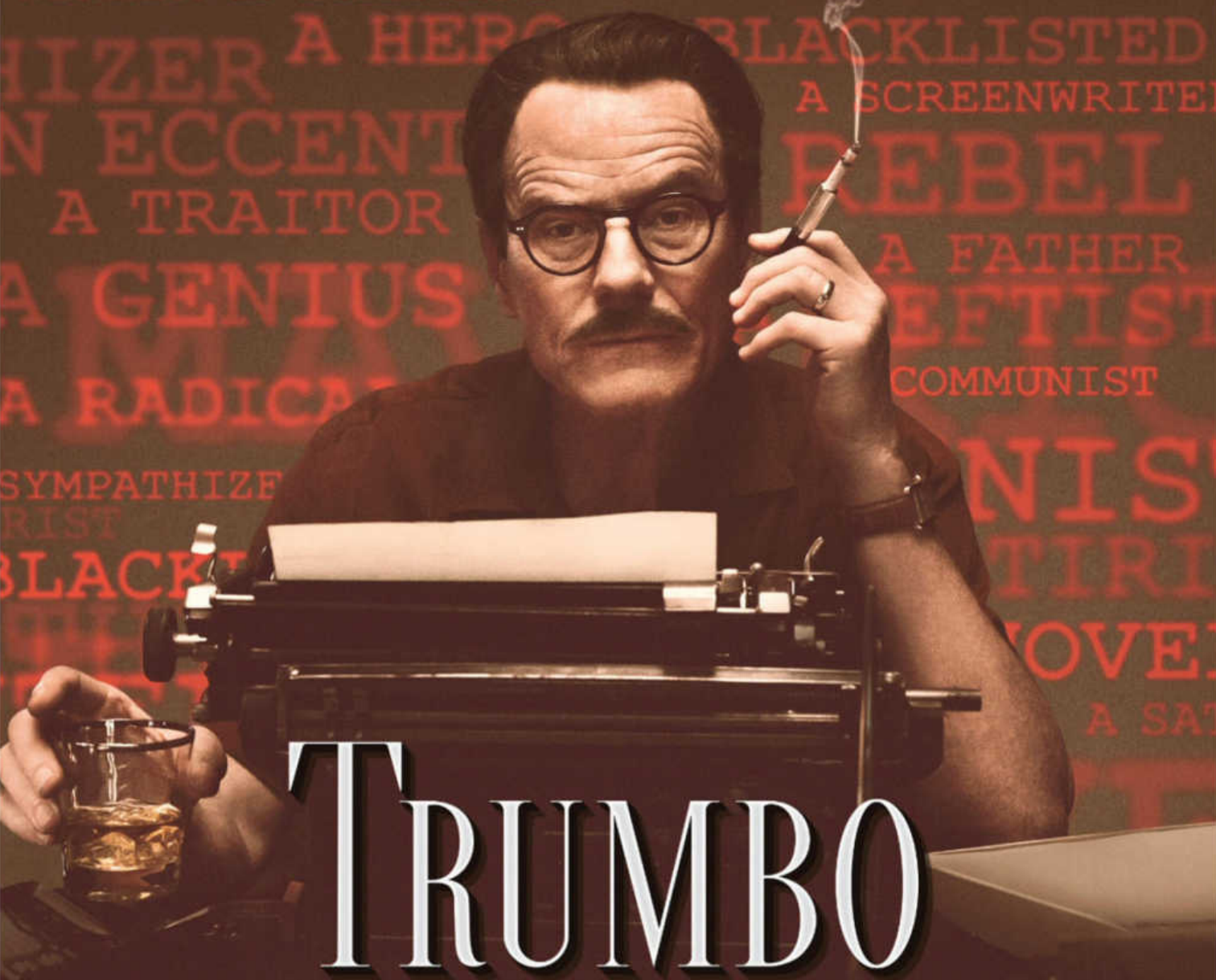
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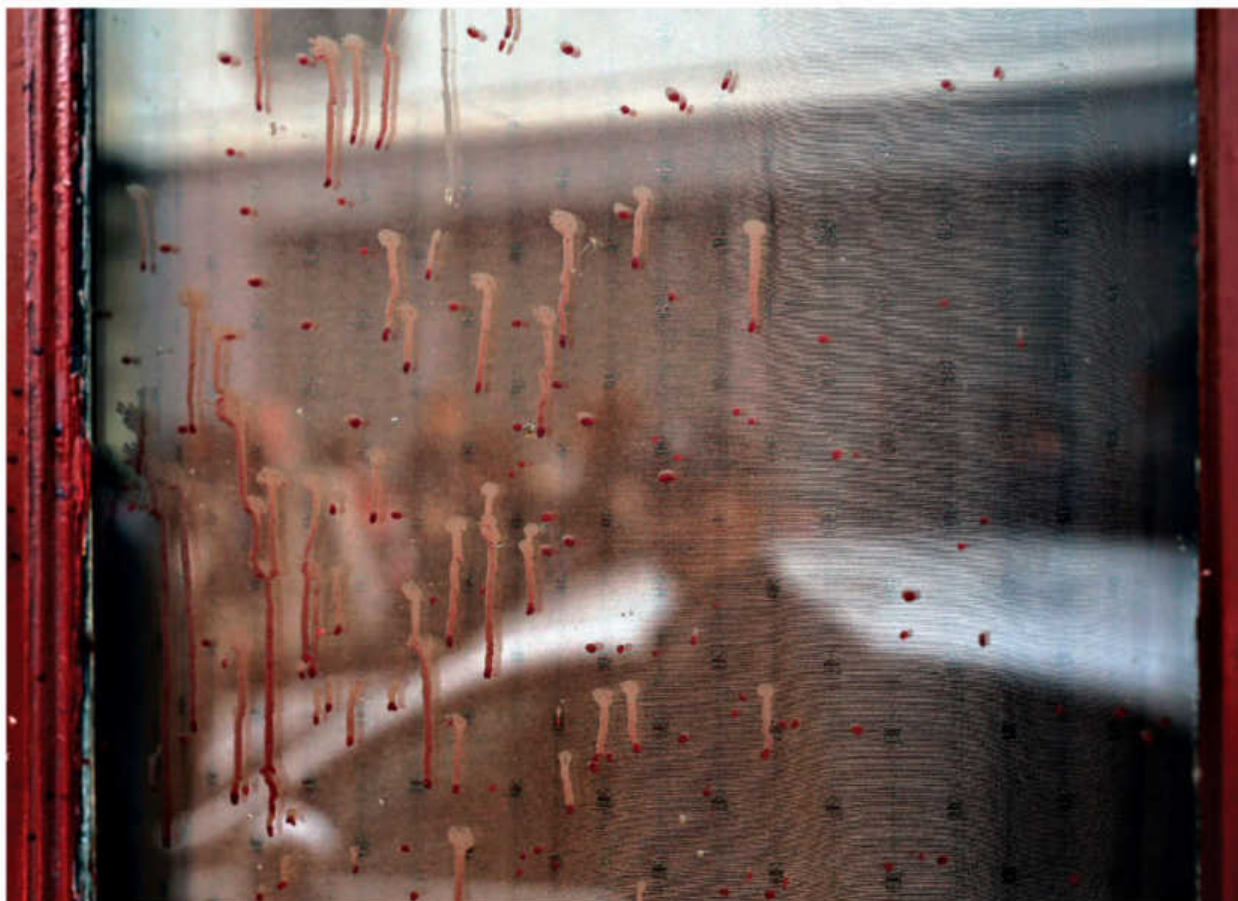
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The National Interest: Jonathan Chait

Terrorism in the
Age of Trump
What's changed in
the right-wing
brain since 9/11.

IN THE AFTERMATH of mass murder in Paris, Establishment Republicans posited hopefully that now, finally, their voters would get serious and support a presidential candidate who had professional experience in the field of politics. A few days after the attacks, Politico reported the firm convictions of party stalwarts, who confidently asserted, "The reemergence of foreign policy atop the Republican agenda will force voters to reevaluate the outsider candidates, particularly as both [Donald] Trump and [Ben] Carson display a lack of knowledge about national security and the terrorist threat."

But that, it turned out, was wishful thinking. Far from sobering up the Republican electorate, the attacks served instead to intensify its state of frothing rage. A poll showed that the candidate Republicans trusted most to handle terrorism, and the candidate who found his overall lead in the polls rising again after an autumn sag, was none other than Donald J. Trump. And, indeed, this develop-

ment may have been predictable. From the standpoint of a Trump skeptic, it makes no sense to entrust the task of addressing large policy problems to a buffoonish demagogue; post-Paris, it makes even less sense to entrust one with solving problems now revealed to be even larger.

From the standpoint of a Trump fan, however, things look quite different: The country desperately needs a strong leader who can assure it of victory and who will look after its people without being held back by diplomatic niceties or moral decency, goes the thinking. Gazing upon the bloody streets of Paris and the hordes of suspicious-looking foreigners desperate to take refuge in the United States, his supporters see the allure of a Trump presidency now more than ever.

The enveloping climate of fear extends far beyond Trumpian knuckle-draggers, however. A CNN reporter at a press conference asked President Obama, “Why can’t we take out these bastards?” Polls conducted days after the Parisian atrocities showed substantial majorities in favor of sending ground troops to fight ISIS and against allowing more ISIS-fleeing refugees into the U.S. America is relying on its lizard brain.

The atmosphere after Paris provided the nearest approximation to the mix of dread, rage, and suspicion that pervaded American politics after 9/11. And once again, a Bush responded by instinctively proposing to send ground troops to occupy a Middle Eastern country. This time it was Jeb, characteristically blind to the prospect that American ground troops would allow ISIS to refashion itself as the authentic local resistance to a Western invasion. At a recent campaign event, one voter asked if the Middle East was safer with or without Saddam Hussein ruling Iraq. Bush replied, “We can have a history lesson or we can talk about the fact that I’m running for president.” (This is the closest Bush has come to openly acknowledging that his election would require voters to forget everything that happened in the recent past.)

France, the target of the attacks, responded somewhat like our country did after 9/11: striking back at the enemy militarily. (President François Hollande vowed to wage a “pitiless” war.) But the United States has changed since the last time it had a Bush in office—in large part *because* it had a Bush in office. The current president, elected in no small part owing to widespread disgust with the Iraq War, has no ready-made policy response to sate the public’s anger. The Obama administration had an anti-ISIS strategy in place before Paris: air strikes, limited use of special forces, aid to proxies on the ground, and

the use of intelligence and law enforcement to ward off threats. The attacks in Paris were a horror but not a revelation; the administration already knew ISIS wanted to murder enemy civilians, including Westerners, indiscriminately.

Because Obama—unlike Bush in 2001 and Hollande today—had no change of action in response, the nationalistic impulses unleashed by the attacks have flowed into different channels from the ones 14 years ago. The American backlash has taken on a wildly xenophobic character this time around. Despite the fact that the Paris attacks were not carried out by Syrian refugees, that France itself vowed to continue its refugee program following the attacks, and that the United States was taking a fraction of the exiles that its (much smaller) European allies were, American fears settled on the possibility that refugees might replicate the horrors of Paris on American soil.

In theory, ISIS could certainly plant terrorists among refugees. In practice, refugees undergo a screening process that lasts an average of two years, and officials dismiss the risk as minimal. Anne C. Richard, the assistant secretary of State for population, refugees, and migration, told a House committee, “The odds of a refugee becoming a terrorist are very, very small.” No risk can be eliminated, of course. Alcohol, pizza, automobiles, not to mention millions and millions of guns, all pose risks. One might even wonder why the risk that deranged men loyal to ISIS might gun down civilians should terrify a country already inured to these sorts of slaughters carried out by men afflicted by different derangements. A rational or even semi-rational approach to the situation might balance the danger of terrorists’ hiding

The terms conservatives used to explain their reasoning served only to confirm their cruelty.

among the refugee population against the humanitarian benefits of saving innocent people from the horrors of civil war and ISIS’s medieval barbarism.

No such reasoning has cooled the feverish response, however. Obviously, every country gives the interests of its own people more weight than the interests of others. The essence of nationalism is to disregard the interests of other countries completely. “We are a compassionate nation,” announced House Speaker Paul Ryan, employing the usual lead-in for endorsing uncompassionate policies, “but we also must remember that our priority is to protect the American people.” And by “priority,” Ryan made clear, he really meant “only consideration.” Specifically he said, “We should not bring Syrian refugees into this country unless we can be 100 percent confident that they are not here to do us harm.” A 100 percent certainty is an extremely high threshold. This is the immigration-policy analogue of Dick Cheney’s One Percent Doctrine, which held, in the wake of 9/11, that even a one percent chance of terrorists’ obtaining weapons of mass destruction must be treated as a certainty.

Republican leaders have struggled, with mixed results, to suppress the xenophobic undertones on the right for fear that their party will alienate the growing share of Latino voters. The Muslim voting bloc—being smaller, harder to measure, and not as politically useful—has no such leverage. Thus this new iteration of the immigration debate has subjected its targets to unrestrained savagery. Rand Paul vowed to “end housing assistance to refugees.” Ted Cruz and Jeb Bush both proposed to let in only Christian refugees, untroubled by the legal and practical obstacles to attaching a formal religious test to government policy.

The terms conservatives used to explain their reasoning served only to confirm their cruelty. “If there’s a rabid dog running around in your neighborhood, you’re probably not going to assume something good about that dog, and you’re probably going to put your children out of the way,” said Ben Carson about Syrian refugees. “It doesn’t mean that you hate all dogs, by any stretch of the imagination, but you’re putting your intellect into motion.” Marco Rubio, meanwhile, objected to Hillary Clinton’s denial that the United States is at war with Islam like so: “That would be like saying we weren’t at war with the Nazis, because we were afraid to offend some Germans who may have been members of the Nazi Party but weren’t violent themselves.” In Carson’s analogy, terrorists are like rabid dogs, and Muslims like all dogs.



Outside the Bataclan theater in Paris, November 13.

In Rubio's analogy, terrorists are like violent Nazis, and regular Muslims are like nonviolent Nazis. Trump insisted, falsely, that he had seen thousands of American Muslims cheering the 9/11 attacks. (Confronted with the fact that there's no evidence of such a thing: "I have the world's best memory.") This time around, the right-wing mind has come to fixate on the imagined enemy at home rather than the real one abroad.

It is Trump who has set the pace. His talent for manipulating the darkest emotions

of the conservative id, while minimizing specific policy commitments, has been on full display. In every public appearance, he emitted new, authoritarian-sounding warnings. "We're going to have to do things that we never did before. And some people are going to be upset about it, but I think that now everybody is feeling that security is going to rule," he vowed. "We're going to have to look at the mosques. We're going to have to look very, very carefully." Every new sound bite set off a profitable fervor of media speculation, forcing other candi-

dates to raise the bidding or be left behind. "It's not about closing down mosques," insisted Rubio, placing himself rhetorically to Trump's right, "it's about closing down anyplace—whether it's a café, a diner, an internet site—anyplace where radicals are being inspired."

The tea-party movement had initially fashioned itself as wildly anti-statist. Now its advocates have veered into wild authoritarianism. None of this requires intellectual justification in lizard-brain America, and Trump, for now, is the Lizard King. ■



Tomorrow: David Wallace-Wells

Who Wouldn't Pay \$30
for a DNA Nip and Tuck?
Self-modification when
gene editing is cheaper
than plastic surgery.

THE OTHER DAY, I found myself looking at a startling photo of my wife standing in the kitchen. The counter came up, exactly, to her waist, which was not itself so strange—I guess it's sort of the point of counters—except for the fact that I occasionally stand there, too, and know that it also comes up to *my* waist, when I am actually ten inches taller. Of course, I've known for a while that my legs are preposterously short—for instance, it's the way I explain to myself that while I can run a few seven-minute miles, the crazy hamster-wheel effort of churning that fast turns my sneakers into sweat sponges. When I went to find a pair of sneakers that could help, the salesman laughed—they don't make shoes to help people like me, he said. But what if they made legs that did? What if gaining a few inches below the waist could be as simple as using colored contact lenses? And what if we could interpret that phrase—*Gain a few inches below the waist*—any way we wanted? While we're at it, what if we could change our real eye color that easily too?

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Perhaps you've heard of CRISPR—an enthralling bacteria-based gene-therapy technique that is spelled like a Silicon Valley joke, pronounced like the vegetable-drawer contraption in your aunt's refrigerator, and promises, in fact, to so completely change the nature of our relationship to our own genes that Michael Specter's recent account of it, in *The New Yorker*, was called "Humans 2.0." They weren't being all that hyperbolic: CRISPR is a way of dispatching a probe into a cell to seek out and modify a particular stretch of genetic code about a million times more efficiently, and much more cost-effectively, than has ever been possible before. It is often described as a genetic cut-and-paste tool: Using it, you can easily select any segment of DNA and replace or delete it. Which means that anything that's genetic is editable, and since *everything* is genetic, at least partially, a whole lot of stuff might just be possible, from eradicating cystic fibrosis to (theoretically, anyway) gene-therapy sex changes. They're already CRISPR-izing pigs to more easily grow human organs inside them for transplant. And, to fight malaria, unleashing an air force of reprogrammed mosquitoes.

CRISPR is not brand-new news, exactly—human gene therapy has been going on, in some way, since the 1990s, before we even cracked the genome, which gives you some sense of the speculative Wild West optimism of biotech back then (and, well, in general)—but it is quite big news. The old gene-therapy technologies were inefficient, ineffective, and cost thousands of dollars. A CRISPR edit costs as little as \$30 at the moment, which makes it much more like cell-phone technology than nuclear bombs and means it is going to be very hard to contain. Which is why this spring, around the time of a chin-scratching "Radiolab" episode, there was a rally of bioethicists and sympathetic scientists to halt the technique before it got its hands on human embryos. Then, in April, Chinese researchers announced they'd done exactly that in an experiment that didn't exactly work out.

Of course, there are good reasons to worry about editing the genes of embryos, since doing so could change the genetic course of the species (the new DNA would get passed down) and, presumably, even given the relatively low price, introduce an entirely new kind of class divide (assuming that gene therapy would confer an advantage to babies and not open them up, like little Pandora's boxes, to crippling developmental problems, as the denouements of countless literary and cinematic depictions of genetic engineering have warned). But from the petri dish, a genetic transformation of the species takes at least one generation, one

hypercontrolling set of parents at a time. And when it comes to cheap technology, a generation can be a very long time indeed—just think of cell phones, then consider the motivating power of human vanity, which is, after all, not just the desire to look one's best but the satisfaction of exceeding what seemed like inherent limits. Frankly, far freakier to me, and possibly, in the short term, more momentous, is the use of gene therapy not in embryos but in adults. Lots of adults. Designer babies is one thing, and could mean the merciful end of countless maladies (and, yes, lead to countless more "enhancements" too). But truly proficient techniques could allow for genetic modifications at any stage of life. That's cosmetic gene therapy—designer you.

It's true, we're not there yet. But remember, this is a world in which a world-famous stroke-stricken hockey player sneaks across the Mexican border to have stem cells injected into his spinal canal; in which millions of people routinely pump botulinum toxin into their faces; and in which so many women have died when the cement they'd inserted into their butts poisoned them that there are casually cartoonish slideshows of the victims online. I mean, there's already an Indiegogo CRISPR-at-home campaign (admittedly, the kit is rudimentary).

Oh! And did I forget to mention that gene therapy in fully formed humans is *already* happening? A few weeks ago, British researchers announced they'd successfully rejiggered the immune system of a 1-year-old girl dying of leukemia to attack the cancer where even cutting-edge immunotherapy had failed. (Layla being just the latest—and, given her age, most dramatic—case of an oncology patient cured by gene therapy.) Around the same time, the biotech company Editas announced it would be

An athlete might grow his heart in his 20s, when he needs it to perform, and shrink it in his 40s, when he doesn't want to die from it.

using CRISPR to treat a rare form of blindness beginning in 2017—and it's just the one that seems likely to win the race, beating out Intellia Therapeutics, CRISPR Therapeutics, and probably a hundred others. And that race for profits is on the feel-good end of the spectrum. On the feel-somewhat-queasier side: In August, Elizabeth Parrish—CEO of fledgling biotech start-up BioViva, with just \$250,000 in venture capital—announced she'd recently returned from Colombia, where she'd received two different kinds of gene therapy, both directed at life extension: one to increase muscle mass and the other to produce telomerase, the protein that keeps chromosomes from shortening.

Parrish's telomerase procedure was based on 2012 work that showed telomerase gene therapy could extend the life of mice by 20 percent. But there are already more radical applications in the air, especially in Silicon Valley, where our wealthiest and most imperious citizens are already obsessed with life extension and are likely to get excited about, say, this recent insight into yeast: A study published this fall suggested that simply switching off certain genes could extend life by 60 percent. "I am patient zero," Parrish announced proudly in a Reddit AMA. She is almost certainly right. What athlete is going to take a glimpse at dogs made insanely muscular by CRISPR, photos of which were just released by Chinese researchers, and think steroids are anything but hopelessly out-of-date? Seriously, those beagles could play for the Jets.

It's amazing to remember that however much genetics is the core of how we think of human life, the discovery of DNA happened so recently that one of the two guys responsible is still alive. For most of the years since, we've thought of genes as a stable code, a map of individual identity chambered securely somewhere in each of our cells—blueprints, from which everything else is extrapolated. But, beginning with the epigenetics research of the past decade, that conception is crumbling. As mind-bending as it might be to conceive of writing MS out of your genome shortly after experiencing your first tremors, or watching an athlete grow his heart in his 20s, when he needs it to perform, and shrink it in his 40s, when he doesn't want to die from it, the CRISPR revolution is teaching us that genes may be less like blueprints than like infrastructure: necessary and mostly reliable but also as modifiable as a stretch of high-speed rail or the span of a bridge. And when it's priced at \$30, there's just no way we're not going to build that bridge. Really, we're already walking across it, smiling and pretending we're in control of those jacked-up puppies at the end of the leash. ■



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 SEAN HARRIS JACK REYNOR ELIZABETH DEBICKI AND DAVID THEWLIS CASTING JINA JAY MAKEUP & HAIR JENNY SHIRCORE COSTUME DESIGNER JACQUELINE DURRAN EDITOR JED KURZEL PRODUCTION DESIGNER FIONA CROMBIE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS TESSA ROSS OLIVIER COURSON DANNY PERKINS JENNY BORGARS BOB WEINSTEIN HARVEY WEINSTEIN PRODUCED BY IAIN CANNING EMILE SHERMAN LAURA HASTINGS-SMITH DIRECTED BY JUSTIN KURZEL

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53 MINUTES WITH ...

Pierpaolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri

Valentino's insurgent, insouciant designers on how *Zoolander* became part of their plans for world domination.

BY AMY LARocca

WHEN THE FIRST *Zoolander* film came out, Pierpaolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri were just accessory designers in the atelier of the emperor Valentino Garavani, but one afternoon, at their suggestion, the entire team dropped its tools for a trip to the cinema. "Oh," says Chiuri, "we loved it so much." She flashes a bit of "blue steel" and cracks up with a deep, throaty laugh. Last year, when Ben Stiller was getting back into fashion mode for the sequel—*Zoolander* No. 2, out in February—he called Piccioli and Chiuri, who are now the co-creative directors at the brand, to ask for advice. "If you have socks, you are not fashion," Piccioli told Stiller. "He said why? And I said shush. I said, 'You don't try to understand. You just do not wear socks.'"

"And also, if you put your arms into the sleeves of your coat, you are not fashion. Don't ask why. But do not carry your bag anywhere but here." Piccioli folds his arm with his palm face up and points to the crease in his elbow. "If you want to be fashion, these are the rules."

Stiller was grateful for the tips. Ahead of Paris Fashion Week this spring, he asked the designers for permission to storm their runway in full Valentino-for-*Zoolander* mufti. And then he and Owen Wilson walked, each with expressions of utter solemnity, the unfilled sleeves of their trench coats flapping in the breeze. "We didn't tell anyone," Chiuri says, "but, oh my God, we were laughing so

hard. No one knew what was going on. It was such a moment of freedom." She leans in to deliver the moral with a flourish of intimacy. "Look, you can work very seriously without being too serious."

But to see them breakfasting at the Pierre hotel is to know, immediately, that these are pretty serious fashion people. He is small and wiry, with spiky hair and a prominent Roman nose—he looks like a walking fashion sketch. He wore a trench coat with sharp lapels, a pair of angular sunglasses, and a leather tote, the kind that American men have no idea how to handle and wind up calling ridiculous things like *murse*. Chiuri's hair is platinum blonde, and each of her fingers is covered in a large, dramatic ring: snakes, stones. Her ring collection was stolen from her house a few years ago; these are replacements, so she loves them but knows not to care about them too much. "They are just things," she says dismissively.

So: They are fashion creatures, yes. But they insist that back home, they lead what are fairly conventional, bourgeois Roman lives—all day in a big shared office, and at night each going home to a (separate) married life with spouses and kids who have varying degrees of interest (zero to some) in what their parent does. "With the children, you really have to stop and go into their world," Piccioli says. "My daughter, she says, 'I don't really like what you do with Pier-

paolo,'" Chiuri says, "But then, of course, she says, 'May I borrow your dress?'"

It would be hard to name designers more influential, and successful, at this very moment. Under their direction, Valentino has strut to 20 percent growth in each of the past five years, and in 2015, for the first time, the house expects revenues to reach \$1 billion.

It's been a difficult time for matching big designers and big fashion houses: Alexander Wang's contract with Balenciaga was not renewed after three years of tepid reviews; Raf Simons was onto something at Dior but resigned last month; most recently, Alber Elbaz left Lanvin after a dispute with the label's new owner. Piccioli and Chiuri are a bit of a different case in that they came up within Valentino—in fact, they are sort of creatures of Valentino who enjoy a warm, mutually supportive relationship with him.

But since their first line, Valentino has also gotten more subversive. There is beautiful lace and spectacular color (they will still usually offer a sexy red dress), but Chiuri and Piccioli also pull ideas from traditional Roman art. Necklines can be prim. Silhouettes are often modest. And, simultaneously, they have written themselves a position in accessories lore with the less-high-but-still-really-expensive Rockstud line, which puts those unmistakable signature studs on everything that will take them. "Valentino was a very known landscape," Piccioli says. "It was the glamour, the beauty, the perfection. But, of course, ideas of beauty change over time, and perhaps what we have done is take a picture of the same landscape from a different angle. Perhaps we have shown the deepness of that kind of beauty."

"Everybody paints the same Madonna," Chiuri says, "but there is a big difference between Caravaggio and somebody else."

That's about as theoretical as they'll get on the subject of their own success—they are gnomish fashion people, after all, and, typically, a bit oblique. But they also seem consumed by the punishing new fashion calendar. "We used to have six months to design a collection. There was winter and summer," says Chiuri. She laughs at the quaintness of it all. "Can you imagine if a writer had to write a best seller several times a year?"

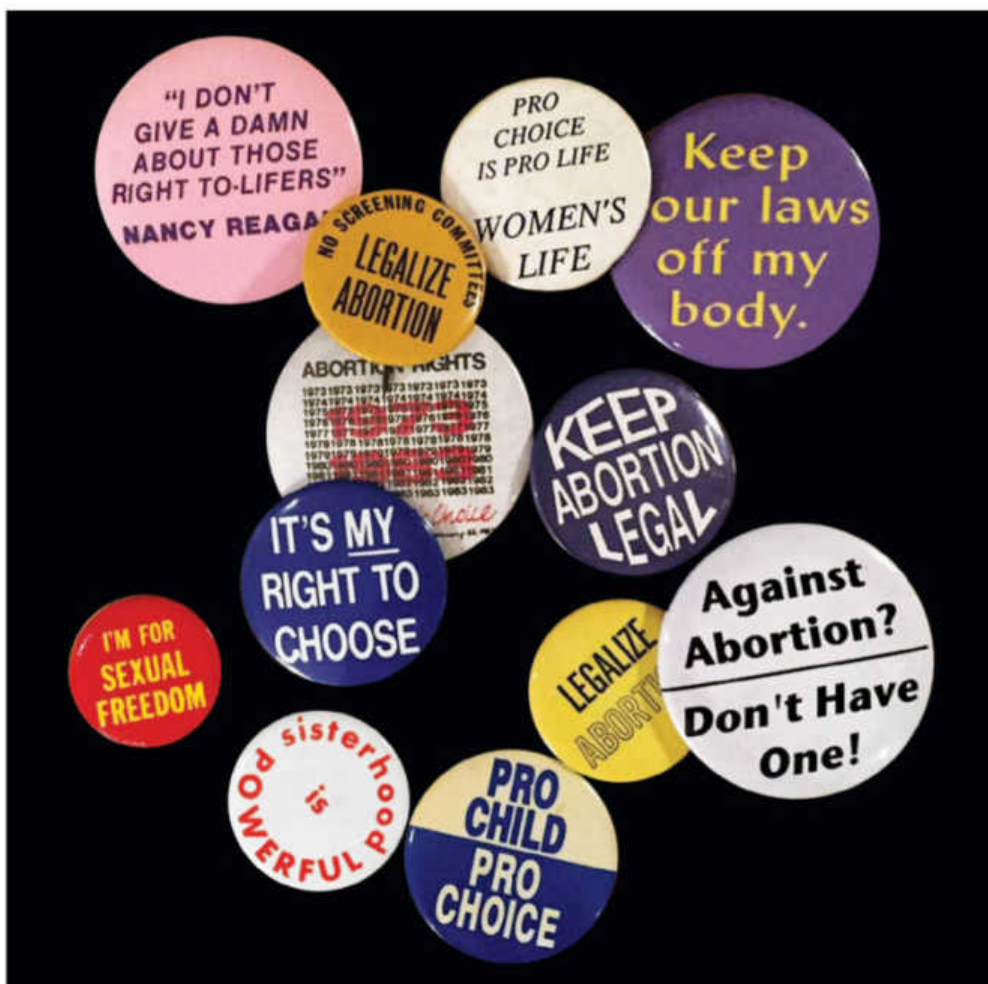
"Look," Piccioli says, "of course we would like to have more time. But I really love my job. I love it."

"If you are a director, your responsibility is to the stores," Chiuri says. "We have to do the campaigns, we have to work on our image."

And with that, the designers gather their things and head for the door, looking, from behind, not unlike their *Zoolander* heroes—off to save the world, armed only with their fashion. ■

Ben Stiller, left, and Owen Wilson, in Zoolander character during Valentino's Paris Fashion Week show this spring.





The Body Politic: Rebecca Traister

Can the Democrats
“Win” on Abortion?
The candidates
are no longer treating
it like a dirty word.

ON NOVEMBER 13, the Supreme Court agreed to hear *Whole Woman's Health v. Cole*, a challenge to Texas's 2013 omnibus abortion bill enforcing an array of abortion-clinic regulations. The portions of the bill that have already been implemented have reduced the number of clinics in Texas from 41 to 18; if it is upheld by *scotus*, the state will be left with only ten clinics to serve the more than 60,000 Texan women who require abortions annually—making the procedure so inaccessible in the state as to be essentially illegal. Just last week, it was reported that between 100,000 and 240,000 women in Texas, the majority of them Latina, have attempted to self-induce abortions.

scotus's ruling will come this summer, months before Americans vote to elect a new president, who could have up to three Supreme Court seats to fill in a first term, a circumstance that would determine the shape of the highest court for at least a generation. Republican presidential candidates have been working to out-nut each other over which of them would permit fewer exceptions (rape, incest, life of the mother) to the sweeping abor-

tion bans they envision. Marco Rubio has suggested that perhaps there are *no* instances in which a woman's life is imperiled by the forced continuation of pregnancy, while Jeb Bush has complained that \$500 million—referring to Planned Parenthood's funding—seems too much to spend on women's health.

It all seems pretty grim, until you notice a crowd of besuited Democrats charging into this dystopian future, swords waving. After decades of treating abortion as a third rail to be gingerly sidestepped, with downcast eyes and sighing exhortations about tragic rarity, at least some on the long-ambivalent left have decided that fighting for better access to abortion is an issue on which they can actually win.

While the topic was not raised by moderators in the Democratic debates, Hillary Clinton went out of her way to bring it up, bellowing with vigor about how Republicans “don’t mind having big government interfere with a woman’s right to choose!” She also regularly includes references to reproductive rights—often using the word *abortion* and not just the soft-lit language of *choice*—in her stump speech. Clinton said via a spokesperson that the closing of clinics in Texas is “bad for women in that state and a preview of what every Republican candidate wants to do to women across America.”

Bernie Sanders may bring up reproductive rights less frequently than Clinton, but when he does, he comes out swinging, promising the South Carolina Democratic Women’s Council in November, “We are not going back to the days when women had to risk their lives to end an unwanted pregnancy.” A Sanders campaign aide also told me that the senator supports the EACH Woman Act, which would mandate insurance coverage for abortion services for any woman who requires them, since “abortion care is a part of women’s health care.”

The EACH Woman Act, which stands for Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance, was introduced by Representative Barbara Lee of California as a radical, if long overdue, challenge to the Hyde Amendment, which prevents women who rely on government health insurance from using public funds for abortion. The act surely won’t make it through the Republican-led House anytime soon, but it has 108 co-sponsors and represents a major step in acknowledging the relationship between restricting abortion access and economic inequality. “The Hyde Amendment denied a full

“We are trying to undo the conventional wisdom that the country is split in half.”

range of access to reproductive-health services and care to low-income women, primarily women of color,” says Lee. “It’s about time we fight back.”

Meanwhile, Senate candidates Tammy Duckworth and Donna Edwards have spoken publicly about their youthful reliance on Planned Parenthood, and House candidate Nanette Barragan has described how her sister turned to the organization for an abortion when she was a teen. “Having more women candidates talking about their personal experiences with abortion, or with Planned Parenthood, or even family planning in general, has done a tremendous amount to center reproductive rights as an economic issue,” says Jess McIntosh of EMILY’s List. “The decision of when and whether to become a mother is the most important economic decision most Americans will ever make.”

Positioning reproductive rights as an economic issue—rather than as a sex-soaked battleground in a so-called culture war—is a smart gambit. But just a few years ago, women opening up about their own reproductive histories, their health-care choices, or their reliance on Planned Parenthood would have been deemed too risky, the kind of thing that could court career-ending scandal. The fact that there are now politicians who have described on the House floor their own abortions suggests some confidence that either the country has shifted on abortion or that we’ve never been as anti-abortion as was largely assumed.

“We are trying to undo bad conventional wisdom, historically propagated by white male pollsters, about the idea that the country is split in half,” says NARAL president Ilyse Hogue, referring to the assumption that on questions of abortion, America is violently, irrevocably divided.

After all, Planned Parenthood actually

gained in popularity in the wake of its recent defunding battle and the release of videos purporting to show the organization selling baby parts. And NARAL’s recent polling, Hogue says, shows that the personal identification litmus test (Are you pro-life or pro-choice?) doesn’t tell the whole story. Many voters may identify as pro-life but still trust women to make their own decisions when it comes to abortion. “When you ask the questions the right way, you always, always, get to an overwhelming majority of Americans who believe that this is a decision a woman should make with her family,” says Hogue. Pointing to polls conducted in red and purple states, including Kansas, Ohio, Florida, and Nevada, Hogue says that a more nuanced approach turns up seven of ten voters, including some independents, who believe abortion should be safe and accessible and are willing to vote based on that belief. “There are ways to go on the offense that actually move voters,” says Hogue.

The Democratic machinery has yet to creak toward this conclusion. The DNC website, for example, doesn’t list reproductive rights under its list of “Issues,” nor does it mention them under its “Women” tab. But Hogue is working on selling the strategy. She has taken a PowerPoint presentation to individual campaigns and to the DNC, reminding them that three in ten American women will have an abortion and that six in ten abortion-seekers are already mothers. She encourages pro-choice Democrats to talk about abortion alongside contraception, pregnancy discrimination, and paid family leave—as one of several factors that permit women to plan when to have, and how to support, families.

But Hogue is fighting a strong historical tide that suggests focusing aggressively on abortion rights is a terrible gamble. As recently as 2014, the defeat of Mark Udall, a Colorado Democrat who shaped his campaign around his commitment to reproductive rights, was read in some quarters as a lesson in the risks of over-emphasizing this issue—despite the fact that the electoral map was terrible for Democrats and that midterm-election cycles draw a whiter, older, and more conservative electorate. In other words, Udall might well have lost even if he had never uttered the word *abortion*.

This year, the Republican candidates’ full-throated extremism, alongside the reality of what’s already happened in Texas, provides reason enough for Democrats to go all-in on the issue. “This is not just about what’s morally right,” says Hogue. “It’s also about strategy. The best defense is a good offense.” ■

A Most Violent

▲ APRIL 25, 2015:

Six days after Freddie Gray's death.

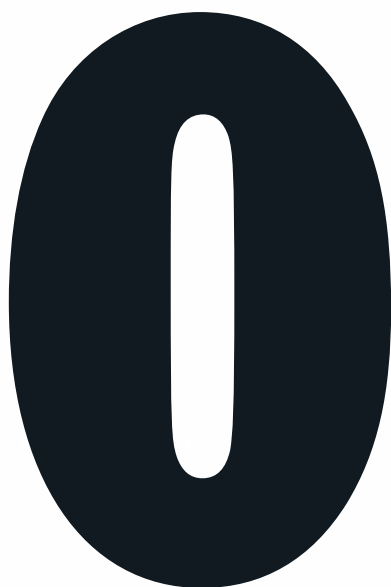


Violent Year

**BALTIMORE,
THE
LABORATORY
CITY**

BY
BENJAMIN
WALLACE-WELLS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DEVIN ALLEN



PART I

ON THE CLEAR APRIL AFTERNOON when the Freddie Gray riots escalated, most members of the city's political Establishment were inside the New Shiloh Baptist Church in West Baltimore for the funeral of Gray himself. They might as well have been in a box. Gray, the 25-year-old man whose spine had snapped after he was handcuffed and allowed to bounce around inside a police transport van, had been anonymous in life, but in death his invisibility had made him a symbol of the vulnerability of African-Americans in Baltimore and beyond. The police commissioner did not attend the funeral, but the Reverend Jesse Jackson did. So did Elijah Cummings, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Nearby was Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake—young, a modernizer, the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. There too was her popular predecessor, Sheila Dixon, removed from office amid scandal but contemplating a run to reclaim City Hall.

It was obvious already that Gray's death had revealed a rupture in Baltimore—since he had fallen into a coma, there had been protests or vigils just about every day, small at first, then growing larger—but its extent was not yet clear. Many of the first protests had been led by an unknown 26-year-old storefront preacher named Westley West, who presided over street funerals at no charge, and so the initial images of the movement centered on a young man of no reputation and no direct relationship to the Gray family marching toward the Western District police headquarters with purpose, a huge crucifix swinging from his neck and his brother shouting in his ear. By the time of the funeral at New Shiloh Baptist, some members of the Gray family were relegated to the balcony, and behind them sat Gray's neighbors from the Gilmor Homes housing project. The balcony, though, turned out to be a good place from which to see what happened next: everyone surreptitiously checking their cell phones for news of the insurrection growing outside.

Among the mourners in the church was a man named Ted Sutton, once a close associate of the legendary West Baltimore gangster Little Melvin Williams and now a youth pastor and an anti-violence advocate. He left the funeral and gathered a group of men to try to locate the protesters. They traveled first to Mondawmin Mall, but it was quiet. Then they came closer to the center of the city, to the corner of Fulton and North Avenues, which wasn't quiet at all. The police had massed in riot gear, but then they had fallen back, unsure about what their posture ought to be. The protests during the past week had been organized, with slogans and signs, but here there was more chaos and confrontation. Sutton remembers seeing an Asian liquor-store owner being beaten; he intervened and called an ambulance and the man's son. But within this disorder, Sutton, a student of the relationship between power and violence, also noticed signs of intent. He saw a cluster of small businesses on North Avenue (a hardware store, a dry cleaner) that belonged to his old mentor, Williams, who had long ago sworn off crime. None had been touched. The targets seemed mostly to be chain stores or those

owned by outsiders. Sutton thought this was a good sign; it meant the protests had some discipline and direction.

Anywhere in the world, anytime police line up in riot gear across from a crowd of citizens, the space between them becomes a stage. A teenage boy walked into the middle with his arms out. The police had been firing pellets into the crowd. "Shoot me!" the boy was crying out. "Shoot me!" Sutton became alarmed. He recognized the boy, whose name was Nehemiah; he was a student whom Sutton had mentored at a West Side middle school. Sutton, six-foot-four and broad, pushed through the crowd and ran out to the boy. "Nehemiah, this isn't a game! They'll kill you!" he yelled. Together with one of his men, Elder G, Sutton pulled Nehemiah back from the stage and returned him to the crowd. Then a police officer fired a tear-gas canister toward the protesters, and it became difficult to see.

EVERYONE IN BALTIMORE seemed to get arrested that day, April 27. By the end of the evening, the city jail was packed—eight-man cells held 16, two-man cells held four. A nursing home being built on the East Side was torched, though no one was ever arrested for the arson, and the motives remain inscrutable; crowds looted pharmacies and clothing stores up and down the West Side; late into the night, cars full of young men circled slowly in prosperous neighborhoods; the television cameras were ubiquitous, unmissable symbols of the broader world's interest. No one went home and no one died.

Each of the American cities where high-profile police killings have inspired demonstrations these past three years has had a different experience of violence, of political protest, of social change—each is part of a composite. Baltimore's has been the most prolonged: After Gray's killing, and then after the protests, there was a third phase, more devastating than anywhere else, in which the police seemed to retreat and then the largest wave of homicides in a quarter-century overwhelmed the city. That wave has still not fully subsided; the disturbance that became visible with Gray's death continues.

There was something else unique to Baltimore's experience that deepened its tragedy and mystery. Baltimore's political leadership is composed almost entirely of progressive African-Americans, many of whom had marched in Black Lives Matter protests. Under their watch, zero-tolerance policing had been curbed, and, for the first time in many years, the city had grown more prosperous and inviting and people had been moving in rather than out. Even so, there was no large personal distance between these figures and street violence. Representative Cummings spoke at Gray's funeral about his own nephew, murdered in Baltimore: "Every day I mourn what could have been." The nephew of the City Council president, Bernard Young, had recently been murdered, too. And so what followed the demonstrations in Baltimore was more complicated than what happened in Sanford, Florida, after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot by a neighborhood-watch volunteer; or in Ferguson, Missouri, after the police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown: outrage, but also self-doubt. The gaze in Baltimore went inward, not just to the politics of race and violence, not just to the social structures that shaped those politics, but to the emotional terrain underneath.

On the afternoon of April 28, a senior police official named Melvin Russell took an unusual call from a friend. A private meeting of rival gang leaders, who had themselves been disturbed by the violence within the protests, was about to begin, and the friend thought Russell would want to be there. Russell, a lieutenant colonel who runs the department's community-relations division, grew up in Baltimore and has been an officer in the city since 1981. Since the protests began, he had spent far more time in meetings than he would have liked, and so his experience had a nightmarish quality, "like I was watching someone dying in the street, a few feet from me, but could do nothing about it." The friend gave an address—a church in Northwest Baltimore—and said not to tell the press. Russell called some members of Gray's family to encourage them to come too. Then he went.

Someone told the press. As Russell arrived, there were camera vans out front, so he slipped in the back door. "We lost the members of the Gray family at that time, because they pulled up and saw the cameras," Russell told me. They lost a few gang members, too. But eventually the reporters left. Inside the church, there were representatives from the three major Baltimore gangs: the Bloods, the Crips, and the Black Guerrilla Family. They looked at Russell—a tall African-American man in his 50s who wore his authority heavily—"cross-eyed."

The gang leaders had arrived with a specific grievance. As the first protests had unfolded, someone in the police department had told a reporter that they had been organized by Baltimore's gangs in order to attack cops. The report spread: It was broadcast on Fox and made headlines in several papers. The gang leaders were furious. One man from the Crips faction relayed a story: When the teenagers were coming down Pennsylvania Avenue, some Crips saw a cop outside his car. "And they said, 'Get in that business quick,' because he wasn't close enough to his car," Russell said. The crowd destroyed

the car, but the officer had heeded the Crips' warning and hid. "So this guy"—the Crip—"was emotional about this. He said, 'How are you saying we tried to kill cops when we were saving their lives?'" This went on for a while. Russell said, "They were absolutely right."

The meeting lasted an hour and a half. Eventually conversation turned to what might be done. Russell asked that representatives of the gangs meet him at the corner of Pennsylvania and North each evening at nine to help disperse the crowds. Each night that week, Russell saw them out as promised: the Crips in their blues, the Bloods in their reds. The Black Guerrilla Family doesn't wear colors, but he recognized their faces.

The violence that first week was often symbolic, but because the cameras were everywhere, it was all on television. Not far from where Ted Sutton had waded into the crowd, and not long after, a CNN reporter was interviewing a street activist named PFK Boom. "The people in my city are not happy," he declared. Then, in the background and on live television, a tall man in a bright-pink hoodie sliced open a hose that firefighters were using to put out a blaze. For a few seconds there was pandemonium—it was hard to tell what had happened—and then the camera focused on the same man, his face

covered by a gas mask, as he stabbed the fire hose again with a knife and water spurted into the air. The young man bounded away.

According to the police account, that same man was arrested a few hours later when he walked into a corner store while possessing a weapon. (The police believed he was there to loot the place, though his lawyers would argue that he intended to help protect it.) His name was Gregory Butler Jr., then 21 years old and from the East Side, and he had been a basketball star headed out of the city until an administrative detail cost him an athletic scholarship:

Baltimore's schools, unlike most, give no extra weight to the honors classes Butler had taken, and so his GPA was too low to qualify. Since graduating, he had generally stuck close to his own neighborhood, but the Gray protests had loosened something in him. He had attended most of them, shouting alongside young men from other neighborhoods he would have usually avoided, sensing the familiar fears of street violence dissipating. Even after his arrest, in the city jail, he found that "most of the conversation was political. There was no fear." Later in the summer, Butler would attend youth-activist forums, speaking with feeling of the "hopelessness" of the children in his neighborhood, of the necessity that someone mentor them.

It says something about the sheer confusion of the moment, of the ways violence upended all of Baltimore's normal moral categories, that during the last days of April, Greg Butler Jr. was the force of nihilism and chaos and the Bloods and the Crips the forces of order.

THIS CONFUSION of categories was everywhere. It was hard to distinguish between the rioters and the protesters, or discern whether these grievances were simply part of the national activist wave. But from up close, there was less surprise; the events had a specific, local history. "You could see this coming," Russell said, "for about two years."



▲ **APRIL:** A prayer circle outside the burned CVS.

The summer of 2013 had a particular significance to many activists in Baltimore, because that was when an unarmed 44-year-old man named Tyrone West died after being beaten by at least eight Baltimore cops, according to a lawsuit his family later filed. West had been pulled over while driving his sister's Mercedes-Benz; police would later say he'd been moving furtively inside and that they'd found cocaine tucked in his sock. Told to sit on the curb, West got angry, stood up, and started fighting the police, according to the account of a passenger in his car. It took ten minutes for him to succumb.

The city prosecutor declined to charge any policemen; a key component in West's death, the coroner eventually ruled, had been a heart condition. To West's family, this seemed like an evasion. His sister, Tawanda Jones, organized a vigil seven days after his death, and then another one seven days after that. The vigils became small weekly demonstrations against police brutality, and soon she began moving them around the city, into its most violent neighborhoods. West's name resonated across the city. (PFK Boom would mention him on CNN.) So did that of Anthony Anderson, a 46-year-old man killed in 2012 when a police officer tackled him from behind, rupturing his spleen. Anderson collapsed in front of his mother, sister, son, and daughter and died minutes later. Like West's, his death had come in an everyday setting.

Jones was unrelenting. "We went to every public meeting," she said. But as the weekly protests continued, West and Anderson became not just examples of police brutality but evidence that the city's leadership could not be trusted to correct it. And then came Freddie Gray.

A similar unease, a worry that terrible things could happen to ordinary people, moved through the police department after six officers were charged with killing Gray. His death was different from Brown's, or Tamir Rice's in Cleveland, because it was caused not by the violent action of a single officer but by an accumulation of negligence. Gray, who had five pending drug charges against him, had bolted when a bicycle cop turned toward him, and he'd been chased down, subdued, and handcuffed. Then he was placed in a paddy wagon without being seat-belted. Gray allegedly called out for a doctor, but by the time the paddy wagon stopped and a sergeant opened the back door, he did not respond. The sergeant did nothing, and within 12 hours Gray was in a coma.

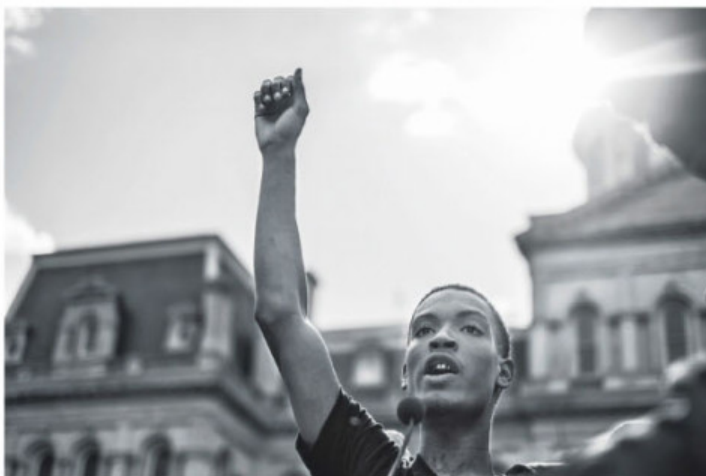
That sergeant's name was Alicia White, and when it was announced, the leader of a local community group where she had once patrolled expressed her astonishment to reporters, saying that White had been a model cop, that she had volunteered her off-duty time to community cleanups and events. When the news of White's involvement hit Russell's department of community-policing evangelists, he found himself comforting several crying members of his own staff, "women and men both." The normal moral categories had collapsed for them, too. The usual line, that police brutality was the work of a few bad cops, was harder to accept without reservation when you knew one of the officers involved and she seemed like a good cop.

On the evening of Gray's funeral, as Pennsylvania and North burned, Mayor Rawlings-Blake held a press conference, in part to plead for order. "It is very clear," she said, "that there's a difference between what we saw last week between the peaceful protests ... and the thugs who only want to incite violence and destroy our city." That single word—*thugs*—stood out right away as a mistake. In setting the streets against the community, Rawlings-Blake misunderstood the basic shape of the outrage, which was that the distance between the streets and the community had collapsed. Rawlings-Blake also missed something even larger: The entire city had been upended.

PART II

THURSDAY EVENING, JUST BEFORE the citywide curfew, a tractor-trailer driver was found dead, slumped behind the wheel of his rig parked on Pennsylvania Avenue, less than a block from the burning CVS. Police roped off the crime scene, said the death was suspicious, and for a moment it looked like the symbolic, politically fraught mayhem of the riots might have turned into something else. But an investigation found no signs of foul play. False alarm.

For most of the past decade, Baltimore has averaged about a homicide every other day, and that had been the pace for the first four months of the year. After the demonstrations, the violence escalated immediately. On Tuesday the 28th, as the protesters progressed at Pennsylvania and North, there had been two inci-



▲ **MAY:** A protest outside City Hall.

dents in short succession in Park Heights, in Northwest Baltimore, just west of Pimlico racetrack: First, a 31-year-old woman was shot; shortly thereafter, two men were shot, one fatally, leaving a trail of blood outside the shops on Park Heights Avenue. The next day, five people were shot, three of whom died; the day after, there were three more shootings and two more homicide victims. The shootings were all over the city, but as they accumulated, they clustered in West Baltimore near the sites of Freddie Gray's death and the riots. That Thursday, there had been a brief media scrum on Mosher Street, where the police van carrying Freddie Gray made a previously unreported stop before traveling on. Shortly after the journalists left, a 19-year-old man was shot on the same block. The next day, another man was murdered two blocks from the Gilmor Homes, with protests going strong on North Avenue nearby.

The killings continued. On May 3, there were two; on May 4, two more, one of them a stabbing witnessed by a technology columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and his fiancée, who lived in the area and were biking to Whole Foods. On May 7, two people were killed; on May 10, four more; and on the 14th,

four more still. On the 20th, a rapper called Nazty was killed, one victim in a quintuple shooting, and Westley West, the young street preacher, prepared for the funeral sermon by reading Nazty's lyrics, trying to piece together the personality of a man he did not know. On the last day of May, three men were killed, two of them in a shooting as a cookout ended. One victim was a 22-year-old man named Ronnie Thomas III whose 14-year-old brother had been killed 13 months earlier. In ordinary times, Baltimore is a very violent place, but this was exceptional. Forty-two people were killed in the city in May, the most in a calendar month since the peak of the crack epidemic. In July, there were 45 more murders.

The most intense demonstrations, the ones that provoked the city to establish a curfew and the state to send in the National Guard, lasted only a week, and they broke soon after Marilyn Mosby, the city's young and politically connected chief prosecutor, announced charges against the six officers involved in Gray's killing that ran up to second-degree murder. They were indicted three weeks later. That Sunday, Russell was at his in-laws' house when his mother-in-law congratulated him, having seen his name in the *Baltimore Sun*. The police commissioner, Anthony Batts, had said that Russell would be sent to the Western District to repair the relationship between the police and the most violent neighborhoods in the city. Russell said he had not heard of this before. He was to be the police department's olive branch. "I said, 'Well, ain't this but a butter biscuit.'"

Russell was in his own way as suspicious of police culture as Tawanda Jones was, though his suspicion was more surprising since he helped to run the department. "I'm so discontented with the police," he told me. Russell had been the first African-American valedictorian of the city's police academy in 1981; though Baltimore is nearly two-thirds black, it took two more decades before there was a second. He worked narcotics for most of his career, and his rise through the ranks was slow. At one point, Russell failed the lieutenant's exam. "I come to find out that all the Anglo officers had been given the exam questions beforehand," he told me. Russell has six sons and two daughters. When one of them was "accosted and jacked up by police—would have been abused if he didn't blurt out my name," Russell and his wife, Lolita, decided to move their family out of the city. "I couldn't protect my six African-American boys in Baltimore," he said, from either violent crime or the police.

They considered Pennsylvania, but too many Baltimore cops lived there already. "When I retire, I don't want to see any police," Russell told Lolita. They settled on Delaware. "I knew only one other [Baltimore] policeman in the state, and he lived in a different city," Russell said. "So I felt safe." Then he had a change of heart. Probably he was too energetic to retire. There was another lieutenant's exam coming up, and Russell took it, passing easily, and he considered this a sign. The zero-

tolerance policing of Mayor Martin O'Malley's administration, which in one year saw more than 100,000 arrests in a city of 640,000, had been scaled back. Russell became deputy commander of the city's Northwestern District, then commander of the Eastern. When violent crime declined in both places, he had the attention of the then-City Council president, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and, through her urging, a citywide post.

Once Batts sent him to the West Side in May, Russell was there almost all the time, mostly alone. It was a hostile place. West Baltimore has always been the city's heart, the center of the old fights over residential segregation, the site of the biggest heroin markets, and, on its periphery, still home to much of the remaining urban black middle class. "East Side's the least side—West Side is certified," the saying goes. But the Western District had been transformed by the time Russell arrived. The six indicted officers had been suspended from their shifts. Among those who remained, Russell said, there was a feeling that "the whole world was against us." On the streets, patrolmen told Russell that when they tried to make routine traffic stops they'd be surrounded by dozens of people holding up cell-phone cameras and shouting, "Don't Freddie

Gray him!" When Russell himself walked through the Gilmor Homes, people would shout at him, "Fuck the police!" He heard it from men, women, and children. Russell had been working in Baltimore since before the crack epidemic. He'd never heard anything like that. "I was so freaked out by the lack of communication," he said.

Russell made a few phone calls to his old contacts all over the city—to pastors, to community activists, to sergeants he trusted—and heard that what he saw on the West Side wasn't happening

elsewhere. He spent most of his time in a small West Side area he came to think of as ground zero: Pennsylvania and North, the Gilmor Homes, the intersection of Carey and Cumberland. At Pennsylvania and North, people were dealing drugs in the open. There were illegal dice games running 24 hours a day. Twenty-seven pharmacies and two methadone clinics had been looted during the rioting, and an old colleague of Russell's who now ran the Baltimore DEA office had concluded that there were enough new pills on the street to keep Baltimore high for a year. (Ted Sutton was getting calls from people trying to figure out what they had. "They couldn't pronounce 'OxyContin,'" he said. Some callers wondered if it was a vitamin.)

At Pennsylvania and North, it felt as if the police had simply abandoned the intersection. Russell began to suspect that they had. "There would be times I would go hours without seeing a single police coming through," he said. "And these were high-traffic areas. Not only that, I was made aware that there were no police coming through because people would say, 'Colonel, you're the only police we've seen here today.' Sometimes, 'You're the only police we've seen all week.'" In the first four



▲ **AUGUST:** A mural going up outside the Gilmor Homes.

months of the year, Baltimore's police had arrested a monthly average of 2,630 people. In May, that number dropped almost in half, to 1,557. The uniformed police, Commissioner Batts would later say, had "taken a knee."

The shape of public order changed. Russell met a man who ran a West Baltimore halfway house for recovering addicts, most of them heroin abusers, and the counselor called him one day with a comically outsize problem. Streetside dealing had so flourished, the man said, that his residents had to walk past 17 separate locations where dealers were actively selling heroin just to get to the methadone clinic.

Russell went out to talk to the dealers. Would they be willing to relocate? They seemed exasperated. "You think we like selling drugs?" they said to Russell. "You think we like being out here selling poison to our own people? That's the only thing we have to do to survive." One of the dealers suggested the city turn to them to clean up the Inner Harbor, a tourist destination that has recently been filled with trash. "You can't get the Inner Harbor clean?" he asked Russell.

"Put us in some fricking little rowboats, and we'll get the debris out of the water if you let us." Russell found this remarkable. "They said, 'No one will hire us to do anything.'"

In West Baltimore, everyone understood what was happening. At one point, Russell found himself in conversation with a Gilmor Homes drug dealer he knew as Freezer, who asked if he could send a message back to the commissioner. "We know they still mad at us. We pissed at them. But we need our police?" Russell shook his head. "Now, this is a *criminal element* talking."

BALTIMORE, IN ITS POVERTY and violence, is a laboratory city, its poorest neighborhoods subject to constant social-science observation and experiment; there are data sets reaching back years that detail the number of chicken bones left discarded on select city blocks (as a measure of social disorder) and the number of men clustering outside liquor stores on weekend nights. Many of these records are maintained by a professor at Johns Hopkins named Debra Furr-Holden, and she could see the data change almost immediately. With so many stores burned or closed, simply conducting your daily business—commuting, shopping—meant you had to travel farther, often outside your neighborhood, sometimes into places you would not have considered safe. The people who had come out of their houses during the protests did not go back inside; for the first part of the summer, something like double the ordinary number of people were outside in the evenings. "Everything about daily movement changed," Furr-Holden told me.

Much of the city seemed utterly isolated. During the evenings, groups of men from churches and charitable organizations would pass through the affected neighborhoods, seeing what they could do to help. Among them was a pastor from North Baltimore named Heber Brown III, and as he moved through the city with his small group of church volunteers he noticed that many corner stores were boarded up. Some had been burned, and others had been abandoned. "These were food deserts already, and people were starving," he said. Brown

put in a call to a black-owned farm that operated on the eastern shore of Maryland on what had been Harriet Tubman's ancestral land. They had already been working together to bring vegetables to Brown's church. Now he set up a food-distribution warehouse in the church's lobby, where they divided up bags of sweet potatoes and onions and drove packages around the city. Soon Brown's church had set up a regular farmstand farther east on North Avenue, at Aisquith, on Wednesdays at noon. "That food was a lifeline to a lot of people," he said. It seemed to him there was a limit to what his community could expect from the outside. "Self-sufficiency for our people—that is where my mind is right now."

Even more urgent was the need for safety. "People weren't calling 911," Brown said. Instead, they called his church. Parents called, worried that their children would have to pass through a phalanx of police on their way from school to the bus stop, and so Brown put together a group of men to walk the kids past the police and onto their bus. There, he worked along-

side a group of Bloods who were also serving as escorts. The calls began to come regularly for mundane problems: Children were fighting on the corner or a situation was tense. Brown formed a patrol. Men from the church would canvass the neighborhoods each night from seven to ten.

One night, when a big fight broke out among teenagers along Northern Parkway a couple of miles east of his church, Brown

got panicked calls asking for help: "There's a whole lot of children fighting, and the police are on their way." Teachers called when they noticed a large police presence outside their school and worried that their kids would need protecting. "To have teachers and principals calling us and saying the cops are here, we need your help—it really shows you what the mood was," Brown said. What they needed from Brown was very basic: adult bodies, and the order they implied.

PART III

EVERY TUESDAY and Thursday, all through the summer, Lieutenant Colonel Russell and his patrol toured the Western District's ground zero with a trailer he'd borrowed from the Parks and Recreation department called the Fun Wagon. It came with basketballs, Hula-Hoops, jump ropes. He thought that if people could just see a uniformed officer playing with children, it would do a lot of good. When he first wheeled out the Fun Wagon, he found it drew out the kids, but everyone else still held back. If a police car came by, Russell would walk over and plead with the beat cop to get out and play. He'd call the Western District commander. "I'd say, 'Just send someone over here for five minutes, it'll do a world of good.'"

For several weeks, no one came. But by the middle of the summer there was a detectable thaw. (Continued on page 84)

▼ **NOVEMBER:**

Melvin Russell on patrol at
Pennsylvania and North.



Holly

The pitchfork mobs didn't quite make it to Wall Street in 2008. So seven years later, the man who brought you 'Anchorman' decided to give it another go with 'The Big Short.'

BY

JESSICA PRESSLER

PHOTOGRAPH BY

AMANDA
DEMME



Bank

wood's



Run

← FROM LEFT:
Steve Carell,
Ryan Gosling, and
Christian Bale



AN WE GET A SHOT OF THE NAPKIN?” Adam McKay asked his director of photography, pointing toward the table where an uncharacteristically angry-looking Steve Carell was seated, doodling fiercely. The cocktail napkin in question bore the name of Okada, the glitzy Japanese restaurant in the Wynn Las Vegas where New York hedge-fund manager Steve Eisman first encountered Wing Chau, a smug manager of collateralized debt obligations (investment vehicles composed mostly of home loans), in January 2007. It was Chau’s ignorance of the toxicity of these products that cemented Eisman’s belief that the housing market was doomed and ultimately persuaded Eisman to double down on his bet on its collapse, a bet that was later immortalized in financial journalist Michael Lewis’s best-selling book *The Big Short*.

Nearly ten years later, the scene between two once-obscure money managers was being reenacted, this time on film. For budget reasons, and because Okada had closed not long after the market crash, the scene was being shot at another casino, Harrah’s, in New Orleans. Set designers hadn’t gone so far as to re-create the restaurant’s 90-foot waterfall, but they’d done their best to conjure the atmosphere, with a toqued chef at a sizzling hibachi and authentic details like the cocktail napkins. Though that wasn’t why McKay wanted the shot. “He’s drawing out the CDOs,” the director explained, as the camera zoomed in on Carell sketching the financial product in a way that looked vaguely like Italian spumoni. “Any chance I have to illustrate this stuff, I take advantage of it.”

McKay, who resembles a taller, shamblier version of Waldo, as in *Where’s*, was seated in a red leather banquette behind the monitor, holding a megaphone that he would occasionally lift to offer direction in his laid-back California drawl. Even though it was a sweltering day in New Orleans, he was wearing a long-sleeved shirt and jeans, as the casino was roughly the temperature of a meat locker, the better to keep gamblers awake. This was just as well for the actors, to whom the language of high finance wasn’t coming easily.

“Syth—synthetic CDOs,” Carell barked at Byron Mann, the actor playing Wing Chau, who was coolly spooning miso soup into his mouth as though he hadn’t done it 30 times in the past three hours. “Let me ask you this—oh, God, start again.”

“Let me ask you this,” he managed. “Aren’t you at all concerned about the rising default rates for these products?”

Mann put down his spoon and smirked. “I assume no risk for these products,” he said.

There was a pause while the actors seemed to be figuring out what faces to make at each other. McKay lifted his megaphone. “You assume *no risk!*” he boomed. “That’s crazy! I think you can fuck with that more.”

Like the collection of derivatives Carell had finished sketching, *The Big Short: The Movie* is a very weird product—for starters, it’s a comedy about deadly serious things and a leftish movie lionizing hedge-funders. Nor is it a solid investment, not in these distractible, budget-minded, please-everyone times. As a package, it is composed of bets upon bets upon bets. There’s the bet that McKay, the director and writer best known for movies like *Anchorman* and *Talladega Nights*, and Steve Carell, also known as The Guy From *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *The Office*, can convincingly pull off a movie set in the world of high finance and that the other A-list actors playing the other “outsiders and weirdos” who saw the crash coming—Ryan Gosling as a version of Greg Lippmann, the slick Deutsche Bank trader whose body language swears he is lying, especially when he’s telling the truth; Brad Pitt as a version of Ben Hockett, an eccentric ex-banker who grows his own food; and Christian Bale as Michael Burry, a California doctor who, despite having only one functioning eye, saw

the crisis before anyone else—will turn in performances worthy of the kind of attention that will (a) have made it worth lowering their fee and (b) cause the studios to pat themselves on the back for taking a chance on a worthy, artistic project instead of throwing up their hands and casting robots in everything.

Then there are the chancier bets: for instance, that this holiday season, Americans will put down their smartphones and tune in to a Hollywood version of *Occupy Wall Street*, a movie about an event that happened nearly a decade ago, one that they’d probably like to forget. And then there’s the riskiest tranche of all: the bet that those who do see it will come away with not just an understanding of what a CDO looks like but a fuller awareness of the cornucopia of shitty human behavior that led to the Biggest Financial Collapse Since the Great Depression and that it will cause them to reflect on those traumatic events, which have arguably never been properly *processed* despite their corrosive effects on our politics and culture and psychology. And that ultimately this experience will lead to some kind of reckoning that causes us to face uncomfortable truths about responsibility and financial capitalism and our *entire way of life*.

Oh, and that they’ll be entertained in the process.

Even Adam McKay, who structured this particular product with exactly those outcomes in mind, has a hard time telling anyone to put their money on that. “I’m *hoping* that would be the effect,” he says. “Like even if it just kicked the conversation a little bit, like if you just started hearing about it more because the movie comes out, and if it ends up doing well, that people in some of the debates would have to talk about it, that would be a huge victory. And if people were to actually get angry about it again, I would do backflips. But I don’t know if we can really hope for *that*.”

Back at Harrah’s, Carell shot out of his chair and spun toward the door of the casino. “Short everything that guy has touched,” he shouted to his character’s colleagues, who had been watching his interaction from a nearby table. Where was he going? “To find moral redemption,” he announced, stalking past the cameras and onto the main floor, where nary a slack-faced Southerner looked up from a slot machine.

In September 2008, Danny Moses, Porter Collins, and Vincent Daniel, staffers at Steve Eisman’s fund at FrontPoint Partners, sat on the steps of St. Patrick’s Cathedral and regarded the civilized world for what they felt sure would be the last time. Overnight, towering investment banks Bear Stearns and, later, Lehman Brothers had been declared virtually insolvent, having gambled away many, many times their own worth, and the entire global financial system seemed poised to follow suit. On television, political types were trying to bluff their way through the news shows, but only Hank Paulson, the Goldman Sachs CEO turned Treasury secretary, seemed like he really understood how bad things actually were. Pale and sweating bullets, he looked like he had just thrown up or was about to, and the three guys from

FrontPoint could tell he was envisioning the same outcomes they were: no money coming out of the ATMs, rioting, looting, the end of capitalism. “Complete societal collapse,” Daniel said recently, sitting in the office of their new hedge fund, Seawolf Capital.

Later, the guys would try to backtrack on the grimness of their recollection, because they know the apocalypticism sounds kind of nutty. They know it would be hard for most people to fathom. Even at the time, the sheer scope of the fuck-up (or the crime, though it has never been officially defined as such) was something only a small percentage of the population was able to see, like those 3-D paintings at the mall. Not because they were unable to see it and understand, though that remains a problem, but because they didn’t want to look. The numbers were so big and so intimidating and the process of how they’d gotten that way so complicated; the fact that no responsible adult had stood up and said, “Wait, hold on,” at any part of the process was just so frightening that, well, you couldn’t blame the average American mind for pretty much rejecting it.

But the look of horror in the eyes of the people who did peer into what they invariably called “the abyss” and saw the havoc that this fuck-up (or crime or mass delusion or whatever you want to call it) could wreak on the global financial system was enough that the government stepped in and, as we all know, offered a \$700 billion bailout of the big banks that sent the machines at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing whirring and staved off a return to the stone age, at least for the time being.

Obviously, this was not a perfect solution, not least because, as many people pointed out, the banks were the chief fucker-uppers. Americans who lost homes and jobs and 401(k) plans and retirement savings and bar-mitzvah money hardly found it comforting that they might have otherwise ended up scavenging and rioting in the streets. Where, they asked, was *their* bailout? And they pointed their fingers at the government, and the government pointed its finger at the banks, and the banks pointed their fingers at the little people who had taken big loans (which pretty much everyone thought was a dick move, since these people had lost said homes). And the little people who took the too-big loans pointed at their crooked mortgage brokers who pointed at the banks and, in time, the whole thing morphed into an Ouroboros of blame that swallowed any civilized dialogue on the subject, seemingly forever.

But the world didn’t end. And there was a certain sector of the population for whom life remained pretty much exactly the same, who were able to watch it all play out like, well, a movie.

Adam McKay was one of those people. In 2008, California, where he lived, seemed like it was about to go broke, too, but he was relatively safe. The writer-director is not as famous as some of his friends in the mob of funny people who started out as weirdos and misfits in the Chicago improv scene of the ‘90s and have come to dominate Hollywood, but in those circles, he is regarded as a kind of majordomo. Even among his close associates—like Will Ferrell and Stephen Colbert and Tina Fey—McKay is “consistently the funniest person in the room,” according to Steve Carell, a talent that, when combined with his rare non-neurotic, pleasant personality, has made him very successful. At last count, his movies have made \$725 million worldwide.

To the people who know him well,

McKay is also something else, a capacious intellectual with edgy ideas about politics and culture and a strong anti-corporate streak that occasionally makes its way, Trojan horse-like, into his jokes. Back in Chicago, where he was a co-founder of the Upright Citizens Brigade, then a ragtag bunch inspired by experimental theater whose shows were accompanied by thrashy punk music, one of McKay’s stock characters was Noam Chomsky As a Second-Grade Substitute Teacher (“You know, teaching the kids about Thanksgiving and the massacre of the Native Americans,” he tells me), and he thrived on uncomfortable-making pranks, like when he faked his own suicide in front of an audience. Or when he pulled Carell onstage at a show and had him pretend to be an audience member whom he humiliated

mercilessly until the crowd revolted. “There is something inside of him that I really admire,” says Carell. “It’s this unrelenting commitment to a bit and to kind of revel in the awkwardness and the horror. It’s weirdly satisfying.”

It wasn’t that McKay was trying to alienate the audience. “The idea is just to wake them up,” says his wife, Shira Piven, also a director. “To surprise them in a visceral way.”

He especially liked when he could make the government, or corporations, the butt of the jokes. “Adam was definitely the most political member of the group,” says Matt Besser, one of his UCB co-founders. “He would set up petitions, he was always combining his comedy with a cause.” Like when Pepsi was in the news for laying off workers, and he came up with the idea for them to get onstage at a company-sponsored event by pretending to be employees, which they did, and managed to trash-talk company policy for quite a while until the police showed up.

McKay brought this same spirit to *Saturday Night Live*, where he served as head writer for three years before leaving to start a production company with Will Ferrell, who had become something like his muse. “I loved that Adam had this kind of revolutionary spirit,” Ferrell tells me. “And I think he liked that I was just unthinkingly *there*.”

Starting with *Anchorman* in 2004, McKay and Ferrell produced a string of hugely popular bromantic comedies by and about men-children, usually starring Ferrell, usually heavy on the dick jokes. Still, the comedy always hung a bit to the left. “We always had a secret theory,” McKay tells me. “Each of them had

↓ Bale and Adam McKay on the set of ‘The Big Short.’



a kind of point. *Anchorman* was clearly, like, what the fuck happened to the television media, what a joke it's become. *Talladega Nights* was about this weird stubborn pride that was showing up in America, kind of the corporate takeover of southern pride. *Stepbrothers* was about how consumerism turns grown-ups into little kids."

This is not *explicitly* obvious when you see the movie, which stars Ferrell and John C. Reilly as two 40-something freeloaders who become "brothers" after their parents marry and contains a scene in which Ferrell rubs his naked testicles on Reilly's drum kit. But that was the idea.

When *Stepbrothers* came out in July 2008, it grossed \$128.1 million at the box office. McKay's business manager had been smart enough to pull his money out of the market before it crashed a few months later. Still, as McKay watched the crisis unfold, he was disturbed. The notion of Too Big to Fail confirmed what he already believed. "He has always been obsessed with government corruption, with the fact that our country is virtually run by corporations," says Piven. "They have crazy power and we're all kind of like, *Lalalala*."

THANKS TO THAT OBSESSION, McKay followed the story longer than most, although as far as entertainment value, the financial crisis pretty much sucked. After the initial rush of action, the story got depressing and interminable, with confusing dialogue and C-SPAN production values and no attractive players whatsoever. (*People* tried to make bailout czar Neel Kashkari one of its Sexiest Men Alive, but it was a reach.) And between the cartoon villainy of the bankers and the grandstanding of politicians—who to McKay were hypocrites, anyway, since it was their concessions to the industry that laid the groundwork for the crash—there was no one to root for.

It helped that McKay could at least see the humor. "It's absurd to see people in \$7,000 suits with \$800 haircuts and degrees saying, 'We know what's going on' when they have no clue," he tells me one afternoon in Los Angeles. "That's immediately funny. And these banks put so much into portraying themselves as rock solid and *authorities*, and the whole game is you gotta project stability and cautious foresight, and just to find out that they were selling products that were filled with *garbage* and ended up selling them to each other, and bringing each other all down, and then going to the taxpayers after preaching free markets and asking for a hand-out, and *then* taking the handout, and going back and acting like they are still kings of the world—it's ridiculous."

At the time, he was working on *The Other Guys*, starring Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg as two hapless New York City cops trying to make a name for themselves in their department. He gave the script a Main Street-versus-Wall Street bent: In the end, the pair triumphantly uncover not anything warranting explosions but a Ponzi scheme, in which a corrupt Wall Street firm is attempting to cover its losses by getting a \$32 billion investment from the city's police-pension fund. "I wanted it to be an allegory for the collapse, but as a comedy," he explains. For research, he spent time talking to economists; he even had a phone call with Paul Krugman. And one night, around 9:30, he picked up *The Big Short*.

According to his wife, McKay has a habit of starting heavy conversations right before they go to sleep, behavior she has discouraged. This time, he was waiting for her in the morning. "I tried to tell her what it was about, and she was like, 'That sounds so boring,'" says McKay. "I think it's no accident that most people get bored when they hear about it," he says. "I think it's, like, *designed* to be boring. I think they don't want anyone participating in the conversation, they want you to use this jargon, they want you to basically

go away, they want you to feel stupid, and the second you crack it, it's just endlessly fascinating."

When *The Other Guys* came out, no one really picked up on the pension-plan plotline; it's hard to make a serious point about corporate fraud in a movie in which Will Ferrell plays a gold-toothed pimp called Gator and Mark Wahlberg expertly performs a ballet sequence. "Some critic was like, 'Why do they have these in the credits?'" McKay recalls of the graphics he commissioned of fun facts like how a Ponzi scheme operates and the bonuses paid to employees of AIG's notorious financial-products division. "I was like, 'That's what the whole movie is about.' Then I realized the comedy is so front and center you can't blame the crowd."

McKay moved on to *The Campaign*, which was superficially about Will Ferrell and Zach Galifianakis being hilarious but really concerned corporate control of politicians, and to *Anchorman 2*, in which Ron Burgundy resurfaces in the world of the 24-hour news cycle, one of McKay's bêtes noires. But he was still interested in the financial crisis and how it had played out. By then, the populist outrage had moved on, channeled by the tea party "into anti-immigrant and racist fervor, which always seems to happen when the economy tanks," as McKay puts it, and even the brief flame of Occupy had gone out.

"He was perplexed by the fact that nothing had happened," says Ferrell. "That the landscape was basically the same. And people were either too busy to care or we have to check our smartphones. Or see if we're being followed on Instagram. That we can't stop for a second and go, 'Hold on.'"

"Overall, I think people hoped 2008 was a onetime occurrence and the 'professionals' fixed it," McKay tells me. "Yet we had no comprehensive dialogue as a nation to see what that 'fix' was."

It was becoming obvious to McKay, and others around him, that, after years of keeping his themes in the background, he was ready to do something more "front and center," as he puts it. When his agent asked what he wanted to do next, he didn't hesitate. "I would do *The Big Short*," he said. "How has that not been made into a movie?"

As it turned out, *The Big Short* hadn't been made into a movie because of the same issues with watchability the financial crisis had in real life. Plan B, Brad Pitt's production company, had optioned the rights, and while the story of four guys' discovery of the housing-market bubble, and the method they could use to make hundreds of millions off it, seemed like a good idea at the time, it had stalled. "It screams 'movie'—at first," says Dede Gardner, the co-president of Plan B, "then you're like, 'Wait, how?'"

The issue wasn't the language of credit-default swaps and CDOs—after all, screenwriters bullshit their way around deep space all the time. It was the lack of traditional heroes. Michael Lewis had wisely chosen as his protagonists a group of short-sellers who appeared to have souls as well as brains, but the giddy get-rich-quick plotline, which most likely reminded Pitt of his *Ocean's Eleven* heyday, loses some of its magic when you realize the party on the losing side is not a predatory corporate casino but the U.S. economy. In a book, there's room to ruminate on the moral ambiguity. In a 130-minute drama, they might as well have made a winning bet on the fate of United 93.

McKay liked that the protagonists were flawed. "The studio was like, 'Shouldn't they be more likable?'" he says. "It's like, 'No, heroes are dirty. Martin Luther King had affairs. Gandhi was a bit of a horndog. We're all dicks. Let them be dicks.'"

"I don't think there is such a thing as a clean hero," he goes on. "Especially now. I think the days of the Pentagon Papers, that's over. In the early '80s, trillions of dollars went into the market from the Middle East and China. It glossed over politics, it glossed over sports, it glossed over media, it glossed over everything. That's the days we're in right now. Clear Abbie Hoffman kind of voices don't really exist anymore. Instead, it's whistle-blowers, it's insiders. Like

Snowden. He was inside that world, he participated in that world, and Manning participated in that world, and they're complicated. These are the kind of heroes you get when you are part of a society that is awash in money. Like, you are going to be a part of it."

Paramount, with which Plan B had a partnership, agreed to pay McKay "about a fifth" of his fee to take a crack at the script (he may have also dangled the possibility of an *Anchorman 3*).

They liked what he turned in: It was smart, and funny, and tragic in places, and the get-rich plotline remained enjoyable, which was important, because even though Hollywood empathizes with poor people, it doesn't love featuring them in movies, and even though Americans largely distrust rich people, they still would prefer to watch them onscreen. "His way of making the film went to what to me was a very specific issue," says Brad Pitt. "It can be very dry material. You can be exhausted just by the pain of it all. So it's about making it palatable."

Pitt agreed to put his golden skin in the game by taking on the role of Ben Hockett, the oddball mentor to Cornwall Capital traders Charlie Ledley and Jamie Mai. "The studio needed some guarantee with marquee," Pitt says, because, of course, Americans require their heroes to be beautiful as well as rich. "So I jumped in, because I love the project and I gotta get in to make sure it gets made."

After Christian Bale said yes to the role of Michael Burry, "Paramount was like, I guess we're making this," says McKay, who still sounds kind of giddy about it. "I was just so excited. This is stuff that I think about and care about a lot. I guess I'm getting older, because I'm becoming a cranky older guy who's like, 'You know, the news didn't used to be this way! People used to vote! What's up with our culture?' This story deals with all of that. It's about the consensus, the herd, the pack, the outsider, who are the people we assume are in charge? It's got everything I love in one ... seaweed wrap, basically."

"Can I have a Matt Lauer, no strawberry?" Standing at the bar at Harrah's, Ryan Gosling played the part. His hair was gelled into stiff curls and swept high, so that, at the root, every follicle was visible. His skin was Bloomberg-terminal pale, his suit boxy. He looked like a real Wall Street guy, if there were a real Wall Street guy who had the potential to look like Ryan Gosling.

"Never do this again," Steve Carell had told Gosling when he saw him in his banker drag. "Do it for this, but never again."

Despite his diminished hotness, Gosling was still handsome enough to charm the crew, who giggled at the drink orders he tried out each take. "Can I get a Tony Robbins on His Day Off?" he asked on another occasion. "An Andre the Giant With a Tractor Pull?"

McKay watched from his spot behind the monitor, a half-smile on his face. "I let them riff a little," he says. But funny wasn't his top priority, he told me. "Most of it isn't funny at all."

Still, McKay "can't help but have a sense of humor," as Gosling pointed out, and the final cut ended up containing more jokes than were originally planned. (See David Edelstein's review on page 72.) Fortunately, McKay's bro-comedy background dovetails nicely with the way people in the industry communicate. "I have a swollen epididymis," Rafe Spall, who plays Danny Moses, tells his colleagues early on in the movie, as an illustrated graphic of his enlarged testicle zigzags onto the screen.

These were the things that helped convince Paramount and Plan B that McKay could make the movie work. The script he turned in was packed with extras intended to distract members of the audience from the medicinal qualities of what they were ingesting. There was a narrator, loosely based on Greg Lippmann, whose character breaks the so-called fourth wall to explain the action to the audience, an idea that harked back to McKay's Noam Chomsky days (since the average Midwesterner didn't know who

"All the American public wants is a tragedy with a happy ending."

Chomsky was, he'd freeze the action and another actor would pop up to explain), and Gosling, with his suave memeability, was perfect for the part. (*Hey, girl, let me tell you the history of the mortgage-backed security.*) Along the same lines, McKay had recruited celebrities such as Selena Gomez, Anthony Bourdain, and Margot Robbie to explain complex financial concepts in "Interludes" sprinkled throughout the film. And in postproduction, he and his editor, Hank Corwin, added a whole other layer of "stuff," as he put it: montages of photos and music videos to give the events a feeling of being rooted in the real world. "Once I step back and look at it," he told me, "the most important thing to me is our popular, white-noise culture is telling you this is boring, other people are dealing with it, and by the end, I want you to feel contradicted, 'This is not boring.'"

McKay's phone buzzes. "It's Lippmann," he says, passing it to his assistant, Robyn Wholey. "He's kind of freaking out."

Most of the members of the cast made a point of meeting their real-life counterparts. Gosling had had dinner with Greg Lippmann in Manhattan and had been trying to work one of the lines he'd said to him ("I have fashion friends") into his scene ever since. Christian Bale had flown to Berkeley and spent a long day with Michael Burry; he came back with not only an eerily accurate depiction of his mannerisms but the man's actual cargo shorts and T-shirt, which he is wearing in the movie. "I love playing a real character," Bale tells me happily. "Because you have evidence, so when you present something to a director, and they say, 'What are you doing?,' you can go, 'Look, this is what the guy's like,' and they can't argue with you."

"The real people have been the biggest challenge," says McKay, who had the duller job of fielding individual complaints: *Why do I have to be talking about my balls? Does he have to refer to me as a dick?* McKay had made some concessions: He'd changed Lippmann's name—the character is now called Jared Vennett ("I pronounce it *Ven-AY*," said Gosling)—and the last names of three attention-shy traders from Cornwall Capital. The biggest change was Steve Eisman's character: In the book, Lewis reveals that Eisman lost a young child, which gives his character a necessary pathos, but Eisman didn't want it in the film, so McKay replaced it with something else, and the character became "Mark Baum." This didn't prevent Eisman from coming to the set and advising Steve Carell on how to be a better him. "It's, you know ... *interesting* to have the person you are playing show up the first or second day you are shooting," said Carell, who was roaming around the set in an uncannily Eismanesque hairpiece between takes. "It's a little daunting to have the person staring at you. And offering notes."

"They all asked me not to ask how much money they made," says McKay. "I was like, I can't. That's part of what's tough about this story is that some of you made a ton of money. They were like, 'But do you have to show the amount?'"

Still, he has a soft spot for them. "They're bankers, that's how they found out about this. What do you do if you are a banker and you find out the whole world is corrupt? You try to tell people, which most of them did, and then you short it. And you agonize over it. So I think they did exactly what a hero would (Continued on page 83)

I Was Interr

Living, breathing memes, long after the clicks have subsided.

By Clint Rainey

Internet fame comes on like an earthquake, with little warning. In a matter of hours, a video can go viral and be viewed 50 million times. Then it (usually) recedes into a very long, thin afterlife. On these pages, nine YouTube sensations whose lives were upended briefly in the past decade (plus one from the prehistoric web era, before YouTube made its debut in 2005) speak about this odd, relatively new kind of fame. Most embraced the experience, seeing where it would take them. Some ended up in dark places. A couple have made it their living and found themselves with new careers. Others stepped away, opting out of the flame wars. Pay attention: Someday, the accidental celebrity could be you.

Caite Upton



Year of viral fame: 2007.

The video: Upton, a Miss Teen USA contestant, badly fumbles a pageant question about American education.

Views: 63 million.

Since then: Moved to Los Angeles; appeared on 'The Amazing Race' and MTV's 'Ridiculousness,' on the golf network Back9, and in more than a dozen commercials.



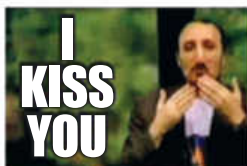
I LOST A LOT of close friends over it—people I'd been friends with since I was 10, people I grew up playing soccer with. One group of girls took me to this party at the University of South Carolina, and I walk in, and the entire USC baseball team surrounded me and bashed me with the harshest, meanest comments I had ever heard. And somebody once put a letter in my parents' mailbox about how my body was going to be eaten alive by ants and burned in a freak fire. And then it said, in all caps, GO DIE CAITE UPTON, GO DIE FOR YOUR STUPIDITY. That's the kind of stuff people would say to me for two years.

I definitely went through a period where I was very, very depressed. But I never let anybody see that stuff, except for people I could trust. I had some very dark moments where I thought about committing suicide. The fact that I have such an amazing family and friends, it really, really helped. *[Begins to tear up]* Sorry, it's just really emotional. This is the first time I've actually been able to talk about it. It was awful, and it was every single day for a good two years. I've only spoken to my fiancé about how I felt in those moments truthfully, and my best friend. And, recently, my mom. But, like, my dad doesn't even know yet.

The past few years, going brunette, I have not had any recognition for the Miss Teen USA Pageant at all. But I also get recognized for having a similar name to Kate Upton. So I'll go into my auditions and be like, "Yes, yes, I know—I'm the other one."

Net-Famous

☐ Mahir Cagri



Year of viral fame: 1999.

Views: None.
This was pre-YouTube.

The site: Cagri, a Turkish journalist, put up a site seeking a girlfriend, full of photos of himself (playing Ping-Pong, holding an accordion) and awkward English ("I have many many music enstrumans my home I can play"). Claimed the goofy language was added by a hacker.

Since then: In 2006, threatened to sue Sacha Baron Cohen and Fox over Cohen's Borat character, which Cagri believed to be based on his likeness. Now completing a documentary about his life, 'I Kiss You.'



I am married now, so my average day is

spent with my wife. We are practicing sports, listening to music, traveling, doing picnics. Nothing changed about my identity or lifestyle after being famous. I am still living in the same neighborhood, with same friends. But if I wanted—and it is still possible—I could live in the U.S. Hollywood promised me a villa, servants, and limo, but I didn't want that.

The best part of being famous is that you can give messages to millions of people who love you around the world and orient them toward good things. Also, having many friends from different parts of world—including ladies, of course.

[On Borat] Of course I am mad at him—wouldn't you be? It's disrespect, without my permission, earning lots of money. This is stealing. If they had even a little dignity, Borat and the company could apologize to me, but they didn't even do that. I don't want to descend to their level. I transferred it to the greatest court and greatest judge, Allah. He will make them pay even if they are not aware.

☐ Judson Laipply



Year of viral fame: 2006.

The video: A six-minute comic dance routine encapsulating familiar steps: The Twist leads to Travolta leads to "Thriller," etc.

Views: 294 million.

Since then: Performs the routine constantly. Jimmy Fallon airs a similar recurring bit with celebrities, including Michelle Obama.



I'M ONE of the few where my video affected

my current career. I was already working this inspirational-comedian idea and doing the dance—and then that was like a 20-year boost of marketing and exposure. I was lucky: What I got famous for was something I was already becoming good at. The most-watched video back then was, like, the Smosh Pokémon theme song. So my video was one of the

first that people could relate to past the age of 20. And because it was right when YouTube was becoming popular, a lot of news stations would use it to show what's on there.

The biggest—I don't really want to say *problem*—is that I'm turning 40. I have maybe just ten more years of being able to physically do the dance. I joke that it's going to go from being funny to being sad. But I don't regret anything, not in the slightest.

☐ Ted Williams



Year of viral fame: 2011.

The video: Williams, a homeless veteran in Columbus, Ohio, reveals a ready-for-radio baritone.

Views: 34 million.

Since then: In 2013, narrated 'Houseless,' a film about homelessness, and has done TV-ad voice-overs. This year, announced (and then quit) a presidential campaign.



I [got a call about] a job at a local radio station. I knew nothing about viral Internet sensations, so when I went down the following day, all these microphones and cameras were thrust into my face—"Uh, hi, would you like to come on the Today show?" I mean, who wouldn't enjoy it? But it became invasive: "Oh God, you gotta know my children?"

My platform is simple: Change the way the power structure deals with homeless veterans. Second, homeless Americans, period—I want to challenge states' handling of Fair Housing laws. And I'm tired of them outsourcing our jobs.

Kevin Heinz and Jill Peterson



JK WEDDING

ENTRANCE

DANCE

Year of viral fame: 2009.

The video: A wedding party performs a choreographed dance down the aisle to Chris Brown's "Forever."

Views: 91 million.

Since then: She's a criminal-justice professor; he's a lawyer.



PETERSON: Kevin put it online because we had a few friends who couldn't make it to the wedding. The next morning, it had 100,000 views. We rode it for a few days. But then we had to make a decision—either get on this Internet-sensation train or turn off our cell phones and hide in the basement. So we sent an email to family and friends, who were getting hounded, that said, "We're going to shut this down collectively." For the most part, we're happy with that decision.

We used the Chris Brown song after the Rihanna incident, which made us uncomfortable when it went viral. All the money from the video goes to Sony Records—basically to him. There's a TED Talk on it, weirdly. An executive at YouTube talks about their relationship with Sony.

We did put up a website, and money trickles in [for the anti-domestic-violence Sheila Wellstone Institute]. Every time we think about taking it down, we say no. We still get donations. We're past \$60,000 now.

Harry and Charlie Davies-Carr



Year of viral fame: 2007.

The video: Harry, 3, shouts about his brother Charlie, 1.

Views: 831 million.

Since then: Charlie is 9 now. They earn an income from sponsors and still post videos.



HARRY: [Without the video] I probably wouldn't be going to the school I go to.

Howard (their dad): All four boys go to a nice school, which we pay for. What the video has done for us is redefine normal. Coming home from school and having an interview on Skype is normal.

Harry: We go to America sometimes; we go to London.

Howard: We view everything with YouTube as a hobby.

Life comes first, but one weekend we might be filming a commercial. People know about you when you meet them—

Charlie: That's scary.

Howard: So if someone who's seen one of those comes up and says, "I saw you skiing," that must feel a little strange.

Charlie: Yeah. It feels like they're spying.

Howard: Ha—is that really what you mean? They're intruding on your life?

Charlie: Yeah.

Howard: Okay.

We've never had this discussion before. You know, there's a set of people who take it as a badge of honor to get bitten by Charlie.

Charlie: And then they scream!

Howard: We have an unwritten rule. If someone asks to be bitten, Charlie gets to bite however hard he wants to.

Tay Zonday



Year of viral fame: 2007.

The video:

An oddly intense, rhythmic song centering on the repeated phrase "chocolate rain." A footnote that appears onscreen reading "I move away from the mic to breathe in" has been widely parodied.

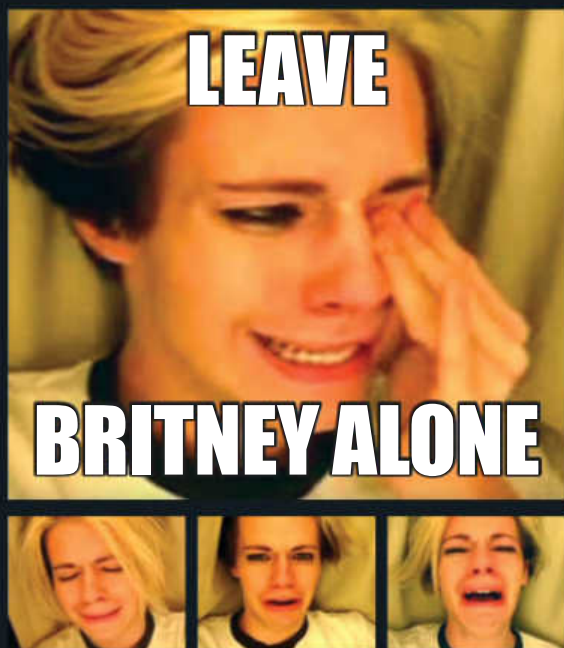
Views: 105 million.

Since then: "I sing. I act. I do voice work. Qualitatively, there's plenty of press interest."



I WAS IN graduate school, and I thought I'd be a history professor. But I'm not passionate about "teaching" or "research" as it thrives in that environment. I'd rather make history than teach it. Many people recognize me from "Chocolate Rain," or from *Tosh.O*, or *America's Got Talent*, or being parodied on *South Park*, or casting video games on Twitch. Several times per year, a stranger asks whether I did "Purple Rain." I correct them. These touchstones are all like old business cards: I'm never sure which ones a stranger carries. In 2007, the Internet had the Rodney Dangerfield problem in traditional entertainment—no respect at all. I could go to major talent agencies and say, "Hey! I get great numbers online!" They'd reply with "So?" In 2015, Internet influence is an accepted fetish. No hyperbole can describe the way every person and brand is frantically inflating social-media metrics as a form of digital plastic surgery. Every facet of our self-actualization is enhanced by appearing to be the biggest Pied Piper. Digital influence is now the costume of our century and a problematic eugenics for sorting human value.

Chris Crocker



Year of viral fame: 2007.

The video: A tearful monologue posted during Britney Spears's meltdown.

Views: 205 million.

Since then: Shot a reality show that didn't work out; had an HBO documentary, 'Me @ the Zoo,' that aired in 2013. Has sold 200,000 downloads of his own songs. Deleted his YouTube account in September and now posts his videos on Facebook.



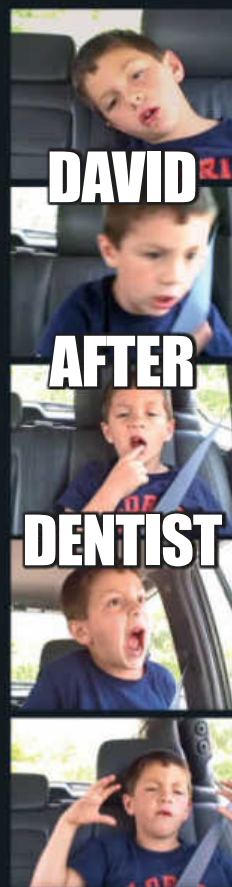
I HAD BEEN doing videos on MySpace a whole year, and "Leave Britney Alone"

was really the first time that I spoke about pop culture. People couldn't get how I would do these skits where I was acting and doing comedy, but then have this one video where, yes, I did mean "leave Britney alone." It was easier to just play to their perception, and I ran with this idea

that I'm a lunatic who cries over celebrities. I thought I would get a chance later to expand on who I really was.

There weren't many viral videos yet, and I encountered cyberbullying before I was aware what it is. At 19, I couldn't handle it, and it kind of caused an identity crisis. That wasn't the way I wanted to be introduced to the world. But in the moment, I just thought, *Okay, I have to run with this, as my ticket out of Tennessee.* Because no one's going to take time to learn the backstory, like how my mom was on meth that same year. Which is ultimately why I ended up deleting my YouTube. Now I just use Facebook. On YouTube, with the anonymity, I would log in and be like, "Hey guys, here's an update," and the response would always be "Go kill yourself." On Facebook, I feel comfortable, because people have to actually log in, and you can ban them.

David DeVore Jr.



Year of viral fame: 2009.

The video: David Jr., age 7, is riding home in his car seat, stoned and rambling.

Views: 132 million.

Since then: Now 15, David stays out of the spotlight. His father handles interviews.



DAVID SR.: I don't regret doing it. I will say that,

as David gets older and this thing continues to follow us, it does give me pause to think about when we should just turn all of this over to him. And how are we going to navigate that? He's a teenager, so he's very sensitive to attention—he's a little shy. Though there are times where, if a celebrity wants to engage with him—especially if it were Tim Tebow or somebody like that—I think he would want to pull out the card.

Lydia Callis



Year of viral fame: 2012.

The video: At Mayor Bloomberg's Hurricane Sandy press conferences, Callis delivers highly animated sign-language interpretation.

Views: Multiple videos drew 200,000 views each.

Since then: Started her own company, with about 150 interpreters on staff. She also writes for the Huffington Post about deaf culture.



I HAD THIS cushy job in Rochester—I quit and moved here,

and then three months later my life changed. For that particular press conference, because it was an emergency, I wanted the deaf community to see the urgency. So, yes, Bloomberg may have had a flat affect, but the content of what he was explaining was very serious, and if I didn't

show that, they wouldn't have taken it seriously.

Originally, I did want to run and hide. It was too much attention for me. I mean, is it cool to be spoofed on *Saturday Night Live*? Of course. But a lot of different late-night talk shows were spoofing me, and it felt like they were mocking the language. The *Chelsea Lately* one—she was doing something with her breasts—was just disgusting. But Cecily

Strong actually did real sign language. So that felt like respect.

That spotlight helped jump-start my career here, and I thought it was a pivotal point to advocate for the deaf community. Prior to Sandy, New York City didn't have sign-language interpreters for press conferences. Now several states provide them. It's so sad that that's what happened. Closed-captioning isn't always enough.

What Comes After

A new drug is supposed to block heroin addicts from getting high, no matter how many opiates they take. Which left Gabriel with only ordinary life to contemplate—in all its beauty and banality.

By
Genevieve Smith

Photographs by Graham MacIndoe

THE FIRST TIME GABRIEL overdosed on heroin, he was technically homeless, crashing on a friend's couch. One morning, the friend went out for groceries and Gabriel shot up. When the friend returned, Gabriel was blue. After coming to in the hospital, Gabriel was stunned that he'd been so close to killing himself, in such a stupid way, and he felt guilty for the pain he'd caused his father, Martin, who had not realized the extent of his son's addiction. Gabriel decided then that he was done with heroin.

The next five times Gabriel overdosed tend to blur together. Sometimes he wouldn't even go to the emergency room. He'd just sort of wake up someplace and someone would tell him he'd stopped breathing. Sometimes he'd stay clean for months before slipping up again. But mostly he kept using. He kept using heroin after his son, Jared, was born. He kept using after two friends overdosed at the same time and he had to administer CPR to one, then the other. He kept using after one of his best friends died from an overdose. And he kept using after he went on Suboxone, an opioid relative of methadone. He realized he could take Suboxone in the morning, quiet his heroin hunger pains long enough to go to work, and still shoot up at night. He did this for a couple of years until his doctor refused to continue filling his prescriptions.

The last time Gabriel overdosed was in September 2014. He stopped by his dealer's house after a recovery meeting. On his way



home, he went unconscious, and the car swerved into the guardrail on a bridge. The medics had to saw him out.

Martin believed there was an angel looking out for his son. How else to explain his good fortune? That he walked away from the crash with just a couple of broken ribs. That he survived all those overdoses. That when Martin called the local substance-abuse center, the nurses knew to get Gabriel in to see a counselor right away, and that just a few years earlier that counselor, Janet Brannen, had started his town's only group-therapy sessions for opiate addicts, where he went even when he was so sick from withdrawal that he'd have to leave to throw up. That his father stayed with him during the worst of his detox. That he lived in Massachusetts, which subsidized his treatment. That he had Jared, who gave him a reason to stick it out. Not least, that his physician was one of two local doctors willing to prescribe the drug Vivitrol, which made staying off heroin possible when nothing else had, because for the four weeks the drug was in his system, he couldn't, no matter how hard he tried, get high off opiates.

I'D BEEN INTRODUCED to Gabriel, which is not his real name, by his half-sister, who is a friend of mine and who had told me about the treatment that seemed to be finally keeping her brother off heroin. Gabriel lives in the Berkshires, and this past spring, on the day of his fourth monthly Vivitrol injection, I went to see him. I brought with me a photographer, Graham MacIndoe, himself a former addict. With a committed girlfriend and a grown son, Graham is very much the best-case scenario of what a life after heroin might look like.

We met Gabriel in the parking lot of the clinic. It was mid-March and sunny but still cold. A third of the houses in the Berkshires are vacation homes, and in the off-season, the landscape felt particularly dormant. Standing by his car in a black fleece jacket and a Dewar's hat, Gabriel, then 24, was built like a high-school football player, broad and tall but still soft, with a thin, sculpted goatee, short brown hair, cheeks stained pink. He had diamond studs in his ears and robin's-egg-blue eyes laced with dark lashes, his only blemish a jagged scar down the center of his nose from a fight a few years ago. (He was drunk, not high.) He looked much healthier than I had imagined a recent junkie to look. More surprising, though, was his voice, which was so gentle it seemed to be coming from a smaller person tucked into his great body. Inside the clinic, a nurse ushered us to a small examination room. Gabriel sat on the edge of the beige exam table, legs dangling, as he waited for his doctor, Lara Setti.

The active ingredient in Vivitrol is a drug called naltrexone, which works by blocking heroin's path. It fits the keyhole where heroin would bond to the brain's receptors, but it won't turn the knob. The first forms of naltrexone, released in the '80s, had to be taken every day, which is in part why the drug never caught on as a treatment: You might not be able to fulfill the craving when on naltrexone, but the craving is still there, because for an addict, how to get high is the first thought of the day and the last. The breakthrough with Vivitrol was that four-week window of highlessness, which meant someone in recovery no longer had to keep the faith of sobriety every single day. A once-a-month re-up would suffice. Even then, it is still possible, at least theoretically, to cheat, particularly toward the end of the 28-day cycle when the drug has been partially metabolized. At that point, a committed addict could potentially do enough heroin to get a decent high, albeit a more expensive one, since he'd need enough to overpower the naltrexone lingering in his system.

Still, Vivitrol was a welcome improvement. In the past few years, as it has caught on as a treatment option, drug-court judges have incorporated it into their prison-alternative arsenal, and reentry programs have started giving injections to prisoners before they return home to all the old temptations and triggers. It has been fantastically successful in both keeping prisoners clean and reducing recidivism, though one clinician told me most

ex-junkies will try to get high at least once before really understanding what they've signed up for.

Doctors treating the general population have been slower to prescribe the drug, in part because it requires a high level of management. Vivitrol must be kept refrigerated and administered in the office. Getting insurance approval is a nightmare. Without insurance, it's wildly expensive—\$1,500 for a single dose. But heroin has increasingly become a white suburban drug—90 percent of new users are white; 75 percent live outside cities. With that shift has come greater political attention and greater pressure to find solutions that don't involve jail time. In October, President Obama made expanding access to medically assisted opioid-addiction treatments like Vivitrol a cornerstone of a new \$133 million federal program to combat heroin use.

But it's not just access that has kept Vivitrol unpopular. It has another problem: You have to get heroin out of your system before you can take it. Most addicts Gabriel knew were too terrified of withdrawal to consider going on Vivitrol. You had to want to get clean badly enough that you were willing to wade through seven to ten days of pure physical anguish—fevers, vomiting, a hurt that penetrates every ounce of your body. The pain is more bearable if you think you deserve to suffer, if you see suffering as penance for six years of fucking up.

T

HE SHOT WOULD come at the end of the doctor's visit. It was the easy part, a jab in the hip. Before that, Setti tried to treat everything else. Heroin leaves behind a lingering emptiness, like a stain. The feeling even has a technical name: excessive anhedonia. It's such a pleasing sound for a phrase that means the inability to experience pleasure. The theory goes that opiates flood the brain with so much

dopamine that the sober addict becomes numb to the joys of regular life—a beautiful day, a delicious meal, a meaningful conversation. Janet, Gabriel's counselor, had told him to expect it to take two years before he'd be able to fully enjoy himself like a normal person. It was a fact Gabriel repeated often, a way of reminding himself that it wouldn't be like this forever.

Setti was good-naturedly no-nonsense, his coach and cheerleader as much as his doctor. She handed Gabriel a set of dog tags that he was to wear in case he had an accident and lost consciousness. "If you needed a narcotic and they gave you a narcotic, it wouldn't work," she said. "You could be writhing in pain, and they wouldn't understand." She asked Gabriel about his new job, and his son, and whether his antidepressants seemed to be working. She wanted to know how often he was exercising and whom he was hanging out with and whether he was lonely and if he was drinking. It was clear she'd invested in Gabriel, which made sense, since he was her only patient on Vivitrol. None of the others had been willing to go through withdrawal.

She examined Gabriel's depression questionnaire. "So this is interesting," she said. "This is the best you've ever done." It was true. Four months into his treatment, he felt like Jared could tell how much more present his father was. His life had taken on a certain rhythm, one meant to keep him out of trouble: work-gym-home. He had a job at a factory making potter's clay. His new landlord had let him slide on the rent until he got settled, and now he was finally caught up. He was going to the gym six days a week. He was in the best shape of his life. He was even thinking of quitting smoking.

Still, he had trouble answering the question about friends. He had a few close ones and a gym buddy, but most of his old gang

he knew he couldn't see, because even if he couldn't do opiates, he could do other things. Alcohol in particular was tricky. Vivitrol blocks the same receptors that make drinking feel euphoric. Gabriel could still get the physical effects of drinking—slow response time, poor motor skills, reduced inhibition—but there was no warm, happy glow, at least not for the first few weeks after his injection. Toward the end of the cycle, he could enjoy a drink, but when he did, he felt his resolve melting a few beers in. He thought he should probably just not drink at all, but he didn't really want to do that either. He asked about upping his dose of antidepressants.

JARED WENT TO preschool in the same building, a community center, as the gym, so father and son would often hang out there in the sun-soaked lounge, where Martin usually joined them. Some days, Jared went home with Gabriel to spend the night. On this day, we ran into Gabriel's ex-girlfriend in the parking lot as she was picking up Jared. We waved to him in the backseat, a smiley 3-year-old with a juice-box mustache. Inside, Martin sat near the window, reading a book on the history of Romanticism.

Martin, who is slight, with a short white beard and a muss of white hair, was dressed head-to-toe in denim. If you ask Martin where he's lived, he quotes Beckett. In the morning, he wakes up early and feeds the birds in the field behind his apartment, then he writes for three hours. He writes poems. He writes about what he reads. He quotes Emerson to explain this habit. He will tell you this in a voice barely above a whisper. It's that voice that connects father and son, though Gabriel's is loud by comparison.

While Gabriel lifted weights, Martin told me about his guilt at missing all the signs of trouble when his son was a teenager, how he believed Gabriel when he explained away the needle Martin found. He admitted he often doesn't understand his son and wonders if his own interiority is partly to blame for Gabriel's problems. Martin had studied the methods of Rudolf Steiner, the mystic philosopher. He met Gabriel's mother in Wales, where they were both working as caregivers in a Camphill community, a self-sustaining village for the developmentally disabled inspired by Steiner's work. Gabriel was born there. When he was 3, the family moved to another Camphill community in the Hudson Valley. There were no boys his age, so Gabriel often played alone. He hated it, even more so when his mother, who is Dutch, decided to return to the Netherlands. He lived with her for a few years before coming back to live with his father, who had by then moved to the Berkshires.

Martin looked out at the countryside and saw utopia, saw the ability to work with one's hands, saw a way to live well with little. His son looked out and saw guns and ATVs and boredom. He saw Marlboros and trucks. He saw heroin. "Gabriel's thing is four-wheelers, bulking up," Martin said. "I said to him, 'Who the hell is your father? Who was your mother with?'"

Martin was hopeful but cautious about his son's future. "He seems stable now," he said. "You just have to trust that he's committed to the path he's on, but there's always that possibility. So you live with a kind of shadow." He talked about Gabriel's "heartforce," that goodness in him that Martin believed would carry him through. To his addiction, Gabriel had given the years when most of us begin to figure out who we are and what we want. He had talked to his dad about maybe wanting to be a plumber, though so far it was only talk. "He is a young 24," Martin said. "I've told him, What do you really want to do? Who are you? What is it you plan to do with your wild

On Vivitrol, Gabriel wore a dog tag in case he got in an accident and couldn't communicate; a regular narcotic in an ER would have no effect.



and precious life?," as Mary Oliver said." He grew quiet and looked away. When he started speaking again, there were tears in his eyes.

THE CLINIC WHERE Janet works is housed in an old Victorian. She met us at the door with hugs. "I remember the most striking thing was your eyes," she said to Gabriel. "Fear, sadness, desperation, but also a kind of finality. Sometimes I see folks and I think they're not ready yet. He was ready to get clean."

Janet was full of stories, wisdom handed down from addicts. There was the addict who told her that heroin was the answer to all of life's problems, so why should he quit? And the one who wanted to get high so badly he paid someone to cut out his naltrexone implant—an alternative to the injectable Vivitrol that's released via a microchip embedded in the skin. She talked about how the Vivitrol shot "catapults the person into the possibility of being able to get to who you are really and what you want, because it literally stops you from thinking *I can go do heroin*." One patient told her how he didn't know what to think about with his morning coffee now that he didn't have to think about how to score that day.

Gabriel nodded. Heroin for him, too, had been a revelation. "There's nothing for me like that experience of instantly being wiped free of any pain," he said. "It's unnatural. So once you experience it, what are you supposed to do with that? It's not something that's supposed to be experienced."

Sometimes Gabriel could go a few weeks without thinking about heroin, then it would just pop into his head. Things could be going beautifully, and the thought would cross his mind how much more beautiful they'd be if he were high. Or he'd be driving and he'd see someone he used to get high (Continued on page 86)

BERGDORF GOODMAN

BRILLIANT GIFTS



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THE CUT

The Power Potluck

We hosted a dinner party
in our minds.
Everyone from Coco Chanel
to North West showed up.

Illustrations by
**JEAN-PHILIPPE
DELHOMME**

Styling by
REBECCA RAMSEY



↑ On **GLORIA STEINEM**: Michael Kors Collection dickey, \$295, cashmere shell, \$650, crêpe skirt, \$1,795, sandals, \$695, at 790 Madison Ave.; 212-452-4685.



"When I stop and ask myself, 'What am I really hungry for?,' the answer is always, 'I'm hungry for balance, I'm hungry to do something other than work.'"

"Sanity is a cozy lie."

"I prefer to think of myself as being inside a tangled knot; tangled knots fascinate me."

↑ On **ELENA FERRANTE**: Bulgari bracelet, *price upon request*, and MVSA blue-topaz-and-diamond ring, \$4,700, at 730 Fifth Ave.; 212-315-9000.

↑ On **OPRAH**: Oscar de la Renta jacquard dress, \$2,690 at *net-a-porter.com*. David Yurman amethyst earrings, \$1,950 at *davidyurman.com*.

↑ On **SUSAN SONTAG**: Céline cotton shirt, \$1,050, and wool trousers, \$2,450, at 870 Madison Ave.; 212-535-3703. Patek Philippe yellow-gold Calatrava watch, \$19,300 at 727 Fifth Ave.; 212-755-8000.



"I'm probably like 160 pounds right now and can catch a dick whenever I want."

"Nothing is worth more than laughter. It is strength to laugh and to abandon oneself, to be light."

↑ On AMY SCHUMER: Diane von Furstenberg crêpe dress, \$430 at net-a-porter.com.

↑ On FRIDA KAHLO: Gucci embroidered dress, \$8,500 at 725 Fifth Ave.; 212-826-2600. Wilhelm silk-flower headdress, \$425 at wilhelm-nyc.com. Etró amethyst-and-lapis earrings, \$940 at net-a-porter.com. Fendi embellished pumps, \$905 at net-a-porter.com.



"I never know
what day it is.
Never, ever, ever."

"As long as
you know men
are like children,
you know
everything!"

↑ On **RIHANNA**: Dior knitted fur dress, \$15,000 at 21 E. 57th St.; 212-931-2950. Jennifer Fisher gold-plated hoop earrings, \$275 at barneys.com.

↑ On **COCO CHANEL**: Chanel cotton tweed jacket, \$4,800, tweed pants, \$2,000, and glass-pearl necklace, \$5,825, at 15 E. 57th St.; 212-355-5050. Verdura gold cuff, \$49,500 at 745 Fifth Ave.; 212-758-3388.



"We are the women our parents warned us against."

"I said no pictures."

➤ **On NORTH WEST:** Yeezy Season 1 cotton sweatshirt, \$455 at barneys.com. Givenchy python-leather bag, \$7,750 at net-a-porter.com. Dr. Martens leather combat boot, \$75 at drmartens.com.

Steinem quote from 1978 ERA speech;
Ferrante quote from *Vanity Fair*, 2015;
Winfrey quote from *O, The Oprah Magazine*, 2009;
Sontag quote from *Esquire*, 1968;

Schumer quote from her *Glamour* Awards 2015 acceptance speech;
Kahlo quote from her diary;
Rihanna quote from *Vogue*, 2012;
Chanel quote from *The Gospel According to Coco Chanel*;
West quote from the *Daily Mail*, 2015.

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THE QUEEN'S BRA-MAKER

LOOK LOOK MEET

THE UNDERWORLD

SADNA IN GOWANUS

FLASHED BOWERY LOFT

CAFE FISH RIBS IN SOHO

THE BEST BET

THE GOAL: Find an elegant upgrade to the standard green wired (and tangle-prone) Christmas-tree lights. We spoke to department-store-window designers and interior decorators who guided us toward new LED fairy lights, which are strung along a metal cord so thin they almost disappear when lit (making them easier to store too).

THE VERDICT: **TaoTronics starry string lights** (\$20 at amazon.com) are made of a copper strand stiff enough to avoid drooping and clumping, yet malleable enough to fit around just about anything—even a cactus—and then coil right back up in their box when the season is over. They also stay cool even after being lit for 14 hours and come with a wireless remote to adjust the red, green, and blue LED bulbs between ten brightness levels and fade-or-strobe modes, depending on what the holiday party calls for.

BEST BETS



Goop Mrkt:
Valentino Wonder Woman sneakers (\$1,075), Roman and Williams dining cabinets (\$29,000). Through December 24; 10 Columbus Cir.



Lands' End:
Women's leather gloves (\$69), signature flannels (\$50). Through January 31; 650 Fifth Ave.



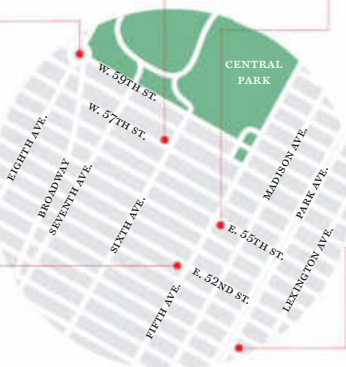
Jung Lee NY:
Silver snow globes (\$275), antique mirror trays (\$150). Through December 24; 101 W. 57th St.



The Armarium Chalet:
Arrowhead Farms cocktail mix (\$17), Tamara Mellon velvet pumps (\$325). Through December 24; 2 E. 55th St.



NOT JUST A LABEL:
Snoods from Schai (\$280), rings from Andy Lifschutz (\$5,250), evening panels on the state of fashion. Through December 13; 301 Park Ave.



MOVING IN

A bathhouse from wellness coach Liz Tortolani, **cityWell**, hits Gowanus (496 President St.).

"The indoor portion—with a three-person steam room and showers—is already open (\$25 for two hours), and now we're working on the 1,500-square-foot yard, which come January will have a cedar sauna, hammock, fire pit, and yoga platform. I'm not concerned about opening in the winter, because the point is for people to experience leaving a hot sauna and cooling off outside in the elements. The temperature switch is said to have a really detoxifying effect. That's why I call this a bathhouse and not a spa—sure, I'll give aromatherapy massages (\$110 per hour), but it's really about better health. And it's exhilarating."

CLUSTER

The season's holiday pop-ups bring the Goop store and much more to midtown.

HOW TO

➔ Groom your man-brows.

Three tips from expert Diana Schmidtke ahead of the opening of **L'Occitane's** first men's boutique, which will offer in-store haircuts, brow trims, and facials (48 Ninth Ave.).



1
"Tweeze any hairs between the two brows; remove just enough to create separation. A good guideline is to line up the hairline with the inside corner of the nose."



2
"Men start to get wild hairs as they age; one or two will grow much longer than the rest. If that happens, comb your eyebrows straight up and use a pair of safety scissors to individually trim the longer pieces. Check back for these every ten days."



3
"Once that's finished, comb your eyebrows back into place using an over-and-down motion in the direction they grow in. Follow up with an aftershave to calm the skin if there's still redness where the unibrow used to be."

TOP FIVE

➔ Witty British designer **Tom Dixon** picks out his favorite drunken-lounging wingback chairs and marble spice grinders now available at his first stand-alone Stateside store, the Shop (243 Centre St.).



"I designed this **Champagne bucket** (\$1,030) for our London studio's restaurant, because everything else I found was generic or ugly. You can also use it as a huge ashtray."



"This contemporary **wingback chair** (\$5,000) was originally made for the Shoreditch House in London. There's a headrest so you can snooze after your long alcoholic lunch."



"This **copper cast shoe** (\$195) is a doorstop, but it can also be used as a temporary hammer and for warding off attackers in the middle of the night: decorative as well as practical."



"My **stone spice grinder** (\$125) is the epitome of expressive minimalism, where you understand the function of the object without too much detail or decoration."



"The **Tank decanter** (\$125) is a multipurpose vessel for water, wine, or whiskey. Its inspiration is the science lab, but the copper makes it a bit more precious."

2x2

➔ Designer Menorahs

Light 'em up.

NEUTRAL

COLORFUL

TRADITIONAL



Menorah by **Josh Owen**, \$100 at areaware.com.



Bel Air menorah by **Jonathan Adler**, \$138 at jonathanadler.com.

ABSTRACT



Hanuka 21 by **EightDays Design**, \$1,250 at shop.thejewishmuseum.org.



Menoramorph by **Karim Rashid**, \$38 at amazon.com.

ASK A SHOP CLERK

June Kenton, who holds a British royal warrant to dress the queen, just opened a shop in Flatiron for her lingerie brand, **Rigby & Peller** (104 Fifth Ave.).



What kind of bras does Queen Elizabeth wear?

"I've never told anybody that, but I will tell you that she's the most incredible woman and looks so good for nearly 90. I go to Buckingham Palace, because whatever we supply the queen is made-to-measure and one-off, just for her. In our stores, we have everything from lace Aubade bras with tassels (\$316) to more practical and supportive Elomi Caitlyn lingerie sets (\$90). Our experts always do

fittings by sight—taking into consideration things like how narrow or wide your back is, in addition to what's going on in the front. Measuring somebody just gives you a number; it doesn't tell you what type of body they've got. Your whole life changes when your bra fits. We change people's lives."



THE LOOK BOOK

ADILAH YELTON, ceramic artist, and **AYA AHMED**, 4-month-old

What are you two up to today?

I just met a few of my girlfriends at the Union Square Holiday Market. Even though I don't celebrate Christmas, we thought it would be fun to check it out. I bought some truffle honey.

I assume you're Muslim?

Yes; my father is American and converted before marrying my mother, who's Muslim and from Singapore. My dad worked in the oil business, and I was born in Saudi Arabia—we were actually airlifted out at the beginning of the Gulf War—and I grew up in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Scotland before settling in Houston. I moved here to be with my husband about a year ago.

What's it been like after the Paris attacks?

Well, there's sort of an ignorant part of me that feels like everyone is looking at me like I'm the enemy, but then I realize that most people probably aren't thinking that. And sometimes I feel scared. Last week, there was that scarved woman in London pushed into the subway, so these days, when I'm waiting on the platform with Aya, I'm like, "Okay, let's just stand back as close to the walls as we can."

INTERVIEW BY
ALEXIS
SWERDLOFF

LIGHTNING ROUND

Neighborhood:

Upper East Side.

Favorite restaurant:

Brick Lane Curry House. "Their \$12 lunch buffet is outstanding."

Favorite TV show:

Jeopardy! "At seven, my husband and I are in front of the TV watching it. If we're not home, we record it." **Favorite walk:** Through Central Park.

"I go there with Aya most days, often to the Alice in Wonderland statue." **Last good book read:** The book based on the movie *Crimson Peak*. "I really wanted to see it but didn't think I could take a baby to a horror film."



GREAT ROOM

An Unfussy Loft

The experimental theater on the Bowery that's now an airy family home.

BY WENDY GOODMAN

The Living and Dining Area

Yasmina Alaoui and Marco Guerra made the dining table from planks that they rested on two camera cases.

The red-on-black painting is by Alaoui, while Guerra's photographs grace the opposite wall.



GREAT ROOM



The Studio Space

The table is piled with “work and trinkets,” Alaoui says, including paint jars, photographs, and a Moroccan bowl.

WE HAD 175 BAGS of garbage to remove before we could even start fixing up the place,” artist Yasmina Alaoui says of the fourth-floor Bowery loft she rents with her husband, photographer Marco Guerra. Before the couple and their son arrived in 2013, a tenant had lived in the building for 50 years and used it to host experimental theater performances. “When we moved in,” Alaoui says, “there was no kitchen, barely any bathrooms, blue floors, and purple-and-orange ceilings and walls.” Those walls came tumbling down, and all the surfaces of the 3,000-square-foot space were white-washed, bringing light into what now serves as a home and studio. As for the decision to renovate a rental, Alaoui explains, “We got a three-year lease and a slight discount on the rent. We couldn’t find anything suited to our taste, so we didn’t mind the investment. We also wanted to experiment with building. And having what we want is priceless.” Alaoui, who was born in New York and raised in Paris and Marrakech, says that it was the Moroccan city that really left its mark on her: “It was enchanting, fun, and eccentric,” she recalls, citing her parents’ group of fashionable friends, among them designers Yves Saint Laurent and Fernando Sanchez, whose futons and pillows, which once decorated his apartment in the Osborne here in New York, now hold center court in the loft. “Everything about Fernando was so deep with history,” Alaoui says. “His objects inspire us. Fernando’s home and lifestyle were a great point of reference of how to live a fun, worldly, and generous life.”



Issouan's Bedroom

A skateboard, tricycle, and basket of toys hang from the ceiling of their son's room, which, along with the bathroom, is the only enclosed space in the loft.



The Wedding Picasso

Guerra gave Alaoui this Picasso print instead of a diamond ring when he proposed to her in Paris.

The Main Seating Area

The custom-made white linen futons and pillows once belonged to the late fashion designer Fernando Sanchez.



FOOD



THE UNDERGROUND GOURMET

Deliverance

Maple brings fresh hope (and complimentary Christina Tosi cookies) to desk jockeys and couch potatoes.

BY ROBIN RAISFELD AND ROB PATRONITE

THE PROBLEM WITH Maple, the new delivery start-up that claims David Chang as chief culinary officer, investor, and presumable spiritual adviser, is that it threatens to turn the normally peripatetic Underground Gourmet into a shut-in. It's too easy, too convenient. The website is too well designed. The deliverymen and -women, in their logoed bike helmets and streamlined wind vests, too speedy, too smiley. The spiffy yellow-and-khaki delivery bags too sturdy and eye-catching. The company slogan—"Stay In, Eat Up"—too persuasive. And then there's the food: too healthy-ish. Too sustainably sourced. Too perfectly portioned in its certified-compostable containers. Too

affordable (every meal is \$12 at lunch, \$15 at dinner—tax and tip included). Too good, in short, for delivery food and too addictive—a fact you might have noticed if you live or work below 14th Street in Manhattan (at press time, the only area served so far by the gradually expanding enterprise).

Unlike most of its competition, Maple is neither a restaurant delivering on the side nor a middleman connecting restaurant and customer but a dedicated delivery business.

A commissary kitchen in Brooklyn supplies ingredients to satellite delivery hubs, each situated within a short walk or bike ride of every destination in its designated delivery zone. As it turns out, the U.G.'s home and office are both located

☆☆☆
Maple
maple.com

within Maple's fledgling downtown zones, which gave us the opportunity to go on a Maple binge recently, delving deep into the service and responding to the daily 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. email alerts trumpeting the five-item lunch and dinner menus in an increasingly drooly manner that would have greatly interested Dr. Ivan Petrovich Pavlov.

We weren't alone, judging by the speed with which dishes typically sold out (sometimes 15 minutes after being announced) or required replenishing (the app keeps you apprised of all this activity to curb disappointment). And those delivery bags immediately became a regular attention-grabbing presence at the reception desk, the helmeted couriers an ever-present army brigade in the elevators and lobby—a scene that must be playing out in offices all over downtown.

Is this merely the consequence of a snazzy app, or maybe the Chang effect? We'd have to say no. Maple is not Momofuku to Go—in fact, the kitchen is run by Soa Davies, a veteran of Le Bernardin, and the food is ecumenical in flavor (a little Mexican here, some Indian there, plenty of Asian accents generously sprinkled throughout) and subtle in seasoning. A dozen or so meals later, all but two clocking in under the estimated delivery time (typically 30 minutes but up to 50 during the lunch rush), we can report that, if the company hasn't completely solved delivery (yet), it does several things extremely well.

Seafood is a particular strength, and not something usually trusted to the vagaries of delivery. Atlantic hake (steamed and seasoned with white soy sauce and ginger) and wild Gulf shrimp (blackened and served over pecan-strewn rice one night) both arrive tender and perfectly cooked, and the dish details online reassure ethical eaters of their sustainable provenance. Sandwiches are another forte, although they're offered at lunch only and not every day, sometimes appearing once and then seemingly being forced into an early retirement, as if the kitchen wanted to send them off on a high note. Every one we had was deftly constructed and nicely accessorized: A Cubano spiked with aji amarillo peppers was soulful and satisfying. A lemongrass-chicken bánh mì had all the right stuff, including a light and airy, perfectly textured baguette-like roll. And smoked trout with a creamy horseradish spread on toasted rye was as delicious as we could have hoped for.

As for the salads, which hold their own against Sweetgreen—today's leafy-green yardstick—they're enhanced with chewy

"U.G." STAR SYSTEM: ★★★★★ THE CATEGORICAL BEST; ★★★★★ EXCELLENT; ★★★ GENERALLY DELICIOUS; ★★ VERY GOOD; ★ NOTEWORTHY

Smoked Fish Ribs

Who knew fish had ribs? That's a common refrain you'll hear among the menu perusers at Peter Hoffman's Back Forty West. The fish ribs in question come from Asian carp, shipped north each week from Ledbetter, Kentucky. The things to know about Asian carp, a.k.a. Kentucky tuna, are that (a) it's an invasive species introduced in the 1970s to reduce algae in southern fish farms, long since escaped, reproducing at alarming rates, and wreaking havoc in fresh waters everywhere, from Mississippi to Minnesota; (b) these guys aren't small—they can grow up to four feet long and weigh over 100 pounds; and (c) they're absolutely delicious. To do the sustainably minded restaurant's part in reducing the Asian-carp population, chef Mike Laarhoven cures and smokes his ribs and serves them not with barbecue sauce but a za'atar-spiked crème fraîche. R.R. & R.P.

On the menu at
Back Forty West;
\$12; 70 Prince St.,
at Crosby St.;
212-219-8570

grains, crunchy nuts, ripe fruit, or roasted vegetables, and flavorful, often spicy dressings. If you never thought David Chang would lend his name to a superior-salad delivery system, you'd be shocked by the brazen meatlessness of vegetarian-bait dishes like an excellent broccoli-Parmesan cake swabbed with hazelnut romesco, and roasted slabs of tofu touched with citrus labneh. And speaking of vegetables: Maple makes each non-salad item a square meal by including a side of roasted or raw plant matter. These range from the quite good (garlic broccolini, butternut squash) to the unfortunate (sad brown-edged crudités unredeemed by a Green Goddess dipping sauce).

Heftier dishes are expertly handled, too, though meats can occasionally be chewy, as in the chunks of carne asada that topped an otherwise delicious Cheddar-cheese sope. In general, chicken and pork fare better than beef or lamb. A toothsome, perfectly crumbed chicken schnitzel, accompanied by roasted potatoes and grilled red cabbage, was about as good as anything you'd find in one of the city's better Austrian cafés. Pastas are the weak link. Orecchiette with sausage and spicy tomato sauce was cooked soft and clumpy and appeared generally disheveled.

There is no dessert to speak of at Maple. Instead, you get a free mini Milk Bar cookie with every dish. But this stripped-down approach might be the start-up's smartest strategy: Limiting choice while still adding variety to every menu makes ordering a breeze. And making the cost all-inclusive (and uniform) conveys a sense of perceived value you don't find elsewhere. Maple's 21st-century update of the menu under the door is subliminal, seamless, and habit-forming.

SCRATCHPAD

One star for improving a food-service sector resigned to mediocrity; another for the refreshingly simple, frequently changing five-choice menu; a third for the friendly, on-time service; and a fourth for the expectations-exceeding food. Minus a star for the occasional overcooked meat, inconsistent vegetable sides, and lackluster pasta.

BITES

IDEAL MEAL: Lunch: spicy Cuban sandwich or broccoli-Parmesan cake. Dinner: chicken schnitzel or soy-ginger steamed hake.

NOTE: Salads and grain/vegetable bowls are enough for two to share (or to last two meals). **OPEN:** Lunch and dinner, Monday to Friday. **PRICES:** Lunch, \$12; dinner, \$15.



Asian carp have an intricate system of bones that makes butchering difficult; cutting out the ribs and smoking them is a pretty ingenious nose-to-tail solution to this challenge.

Contrary to popular belief, Asian carp are not bottom-feeders; the meat is clean and sweet, with none of the muddiness you might associate with "regular" carp.

The ribs are cured with sugar, paprika, cayenne, Aleppo pepper, and mustard powder then smoked over maple and grilled.

The crème fraîche is flavored with lemon, za'atar, and Espelette pepper.

TRIBE

Their Dinner With André

Who showed up to Saraiva's first supper at Café Henrie.

BY MARK BYRNE

WHEN ALL THE CHAIRS were filled at the row of tables lined up against the northern wall of Café Henrie, the scene evoked the Last Supper: The Parisian artist, club owner, and, very recently, café proprietor André Saraiva held court in the center, huddled up against the artist Tom Sachs. In fact, it was Café Henrie's first supper, a trial run before the several-months-old Lower East Side space extends its hours to accommodate dinner guests in January. Saraiva's friends—about 20 in all—ate a kind of breakfast-for-dinner meal (croque monsieurs, doughnuts) by chef Marquis Hayes. “I open restaurants and bars as an extension of my artwork,” explained Saraiva. “This place, itself, is social artwork. And artists, more than anyone, need places to eat food and be together.” Tonight, in addition to Sachs and Saraiva, the guest list included filmmaker Spike Jonze and Glenn O’Brien, the new editor of *Maxim*. They sat on Prouvé benches pulled for the café from Saraiva's apartment. Between the first and second courses, DJ-slash-adman Paul Seignyn showed up with his extremely pregnant wife, Sophie Aschauer; his iPhone held up to his ear, music blaring out of its tinny speakers. He promptly made his way behind the counter to plug in to the house system, then turned up the volume all the way. The voices rose in proportion to the new tunes. Later, after the tables were cleared, and while confused passersby on Forsyth Street peeked through the windows, there was an impromptu dance party. “Nights like this are why I rarely eat by myself,” Saraiva said.



Brianna Lance, designer and creative director.



Brett Robinson, interior designer, and Jacquelyn Jablonski, model.



Gina Nanni, PR executive; Allison Sarofim, film producer; and Carlotta Kohl, model.



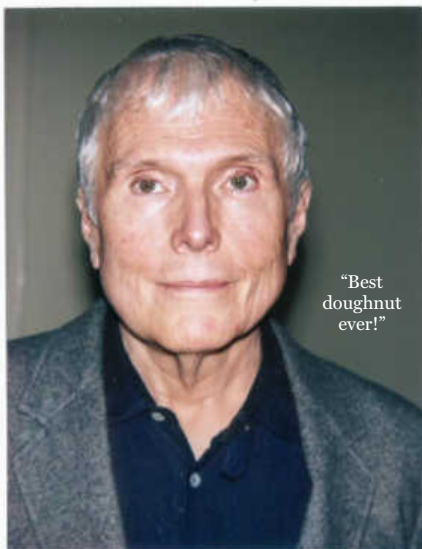
“I met André in the gutter outside of Bar Montana in Paris after a bloody altercation—the fight was a draw, but we were both bruised and yet somehow bonded by this.”

Tom Sachs, artist.



Saraiva and Paul Seignyn, DJ.



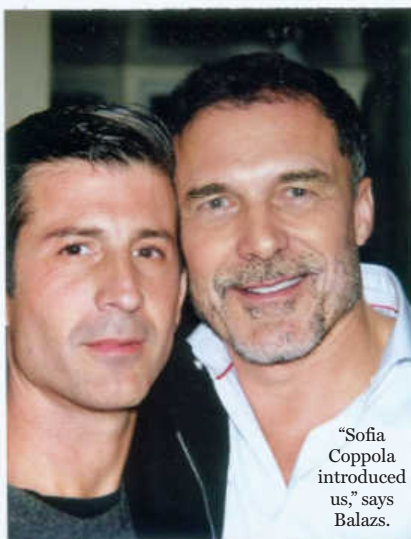


"Best
doughnut
ever!"

Glenn O'Brien, Maxim editor-at-large.



Quincy Childs, waitress.



"Sofia
Coppola
introduced
us," says
Balazs.

Saraiva and André Balazs, hotelier.



Olivier Zahm, Purple-magazine editor.



Gina Nanni.



Spike Jonze, filmmaker.

FINAL EXTENSION: NOW THRU JAN 3 *ONLY!*



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A sensational – in all senses of the word – dark comedy by the immensely gifted **TAYLOR MAC**. **KRISTINE NIELSEN** gives a **bravura comic performance** as the materfamilias of a clan in the throes of transition, and the rest of the cast is equally fine. **WILD, WOOLLY and UNFORGETTABLE."**

–Charles Isherwood, *The New York Times*



CRITICS' PICK

"A DIZZYING THEATRICAL TILT-A-WHIRL!"

–Adam Feldman, *Time Out New York*

"TRAILBLAZING!"

–Tom Sellar, *The Village Voice*

HIR

**"A BEAUTIFUL TRINITY of
KRISTINE NIELSEN's**

pained and profound performance,

**TAYLOR MAC's script, and
NIEGEL SMITH's direction."**

–Hilton Als, *The New Yorker*

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The CULTURE PAGES



The Last Human Robot

After four decades in the C-3PO suit, Anthony Daniels is *Star Wars*' most special effect of all. *p. 66*



Giving the Gift of Bill

Sofia Coppola talks about getting into the holiday spirit.

A VERY MURRAY CHRISTMAS, directed by Coppola, premieres December 4 on Netflix.

“FOR ME, THE IDEA for the special all started from talking to Bill Murray about how I wanted him to do a week at the Carlyle singing old standards. I love seeing him in a tuxedo. He and Mitch [Glazer, the writer-producer] were talking about doing something for TV and wanted to talk to me about that. We were having drinks one night, and somehow the idea came together. What I like to have Bill indulge for my own pleasure and amusement—that’s what other people

like to see from Bill, too. I always enjoy seeing him in distress and then getting out of it. So the idea of putting him in a situation in the special where he’s having the worst Christmas, and then it all turns around, was something we responded to because there is so much expectation around that time of year and it’s easy to be disappointed. I do think the holidays have a sort of nostalgic melancholy and joyfulness to them, and Bill is so good with showing both those qualities. There’s

that melancholy moment after all the presents are unwrapped.

The Carlyle is one of those classic, iconic New York places that fit the tone of what we were going for. There’s something romantic about uptown New York at Christmastime, like when you go and see the windows of Bergdorf or going to Bemelmans for a cocktail around that time of year. Maybe it’s because I don’t live there—I live in New York but downtown, and I grew up in Napa. My dad was into

PHOTOGRAPH: ALI GOLDSTEIN/
COURTESY OF NETFLIX



Christmas. I remember when I was 8, we spent Christmas in Tokyo and my mom carried this Santa suit in a suitcase all the way over there because she thought it was the last year that I would believe in Santa. And my dad put it on, but I was so jet-lagged that they couldn't wake me up on Christmas. They always made magic of the holidays.

Christmas is a time when you can be old-fashioned. We liked the idea of making our version of a corny holiday special that doesn't seem to be around anymore, where

you can kind of throw anyone together and it doesn't have to have any logic—when David Bowie sang with Bing Crosby, that sort of thing, except with Bill Murray and Chris Rock and putting them in matching sweaters. With our production designer, I watched all the classic Christmas specials, like the ones with the Carpenters and Dean Martin. They were vague memories from being a kid, such time capsules—Dean Martin looks sunburnt, like he just drove in on his convertible. I don't want to be impolite

by saying anything about their quality, but they were fun to watch. I think all the magic of show business and the holidays kind of merge in them in a nice way. I love the non-linear, no-logic, anything-can-happen feel and the songs that just pop up out of nowhere. It was great to look at that model and do our over-the-top version of it. And because we filmed in February, we got to do it without the stress of buying and giving gifts. It was only the fun side of Christmas."

AS TOLD TO DAVID MARCHESI

Making Moby

How you bring an awe-inspiring whale to cinematic life.

IN THE HEART OF THE SEA is in theaters
December 11.

AS CAPTAIN AHAB and Hollywood animal handlers well know, it's just about impossible to wrangle a sperm whale. So for the upcoming *In the Heart of the Sea*, based on Nathaniel Philbrick's nonfictional account of the harrowing real-life events that inspired Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, director Ron Howard and his team had to digitally build their own beast. Howard and visual-effects supervisor Jody Johnson talked through the creation of a key shot—the white whale's tail rising ominously above the doomed sailors.

DAVID MARCHESE

The SETTING

"We needed the actors in a tank so we could get the water hitting their bodies," says Johnson. "Then to create the sea going to the horizon, we used computer-generated water combined with live-action footage of water filmed off the coast of Morocco. The clouds are photography and digital painting—so is the lighting, to help get the dramatic hero shot of the tail."

The LABOR

"It took 100 days to build this shot," says Johnson. "Somebody's got to build the whale. Somebody's got to animate it. Somebody's got to light the water. Somebody's got to digitally paint the background. We haven't even talked about the logistical coordination of all those people."

The MOOD

"A lot of what Melville captures in his writing is the feeling that nature had turned on these men," says Howard. "And we thought of the whale as an existential character, almost like Clint Eastwood in *High Plains Drifter*. In this scene, the sailors first realize the scale of the whale. So we wanted to make the tail as luminous and powerful and mythic as possible."

The TAIL

The whale is a digital creation. This is it in its wire-frame stage. “That’s an outline,” says Johnson. “It’s a way of describing the shape of the whale, and then it’s filled in later.” That shape was tough to nail. **“We wanted to be expressive, so there’s a sense of asymmetry,** and we wanted it to taper, so there’s a sense of flourish.”

The COMPOSITION



“I wanted you to feel the awe and terror these men felt,” says Howard. **“I would connect the characters to the whale by shooting down in the water over their shoulder.** I was always trying to build that relationship between the audience and the characters.”

The ACTORS

Star Chris Hemsworth and the rest of the cast were floating in a tank at a studio in London, so they needed a little help. **“We’d show [the actors] rough animations to give the tempo of the scene,”** Howard says. “Then it’s up to them to act. For Chris, it was easy. He has this trick down after doing the Marvel movies.”

Droid-hood

Anthony Daniels's ambivalent life as C-3PO. *By Boris Kachka*

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS is in theaters December 18.

"THERE WAS NO WAY I WAS going to just do the voice. 3PO is an integration—look at the light on that tree!" says Anthony Daniels, the only actor who's appeared in every *Star Wars* movie, tromping briskly through London's Regent's Park on an unseasonably balmy Halloween afternoon. Speaking into the digital recorder he swiped from me at the start of our walk, he recounts his first chat with J.J. Abrams, the director of *Episode VII: The Force Awakens*. Abrams offered to put another actor inside the stiff and fussy protocol droid known as C-3PO, thus sparing the 69-year-old Daniels a few months in formfitting plastic. Daniels instantly declined. "Now," he says as crisply as 3PO, "I'm part of the—what is the word?"

Carrie Fisher recently called them "legacy players." Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, and Peter "Chewbacca" Mayhew have all returned for the first proper sequel to 1983's *Return of the Jedi*. (Forget George Lucas's prequels; many people would prefer to.) "I keep calling us heritage players," says Daniels. "I feel more like an heirloom on the mantelpiece than anything."

Abrams saw *Star Wars* when he was 11, and he grew up in an age when fandom went from lonely obsession to superhero multiverse. Now he's gotten to direct its aging stars—action figures come to life. The most loyal among them is a former stage actor who auditioned reluctantly for "some low-budget sci-fi movie" and wound up a golden robot for the rest of his life. Daniels can be a prickly ambassador, publicly tweaking the Ewoks, the suit, the actors, and Lucas himself. But what true fan, Abrams included, hasn't had a beef with the franchise? Like 3PO and R2-D2, *Star Wars* and Daniels have something deeper than love: commitment. "People say, 'What's it like to go back to C-3PO?'" Daniels says. "Well, I never left him."

WHEN DISNEY PAID \$4 billion for Lucas-film in 2012, it acquired a franchise accused of abandoning its biggest fans in

favor of flashy CGI effects. Abrams has been vocal about wanting to recapture the corporeality of the early movies—and everything else about them, too. Technology may have evolved since George Lucas's multibillion-dollar franchise premiered in 1977, and C-3PO and the *Millennium Falcon* could easily be digitized, but Abrams wouldn't hear of it. Behold, they're both back, and so is Harrison Ford! Ford knows just how real the *Falcon* is; its door broke his leg on the set of *The Force Awakens*. ("Accidents happen," Ford told me.)

Daniels actually salvaged a few pieces of the original *Falcon* from a back-lot bonfire. He wasn't always so fond of sci-fi—he walked out of *2001: A Space Odyssey*—but Daniels did build miniature theater sets as a child. Growing up in Herefordshire ("You could call it 'Poshville'"), he picked up "received pronunciation," the Queen's English so appropriate to a protocol droid. His father, a chemical engineer working in plastics, persuaded Daniels to study law. But he dropped out to pursue hospitality management. He hated that, too, but stuck it out, thinking, *I cannot be seen to be a failure at everything*.

Two years later, he went to drama school and finally thrived. An acting award led to an internship with the BBC.

Walking to its Marylebone headquarters, he would pass "a magnificent Georgian house" that he promised himself he would buy one day. "That house is probably £10 million now, but I live next door to it, so that's as good as it gets." He also owns a home in the south of France.

In acting, too, Daniels achieved something next door to his ambitions, but those were hazy to begin with. "I never worked out what I wanted to act in," he says. He arrived at the West End in 1975, in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. A few blocks away, George Lucas was holding *Star Wars* auditions. Daniels didn't want to go, but his agent said, "Don't be stupid."

Six months after being stripped down by "two plasterers in overalls," he was presented with the finished suit: roughly 30 pounds of plastic and fiberglass, beauty and pain. "I think they didn't realize our skin actually moves, articulates by itself," says Daniels. "It was a nightmare. I was cut pretty much everywhere." It took up to two hours to put on and take off. Sometimes cast and crew would break for lunch and leave him practically immobile in the heat. Daniels once resorted to mutilating an arm piece so they could make one that fit better.

Almost 40 years later, Daniels asked Abrams if they might "rethink" the suit for *Episode VII*. Now it's 3-D-printed in-house, its parts almost instantly replaceable. But back in the early '80s, he told *People* magazine, "I really would have liked to smash the costume up with a sledgehammer ... I had an awful lot of hostility toward the costume and the character."

C-3PO's lines were muffled by his elaborate headgear on-set. So in 1976, Daniels traveled to the U.S. for the first time to rerecord them. "I walked into the sound

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: DAVID JAMES/COURTESY OF LUCASFILM; LUCASFILM/PHOTOFEST; COURTESY OF LUCASFILM



*Clockwise from top right:
Daniels on the set of
The Force Awakens with
J.J. Abrams in September
2014; with Carrie Fisher in
1978; with his costume circa
Return of the Jedi; with
George Lucas on the set
of Attack of the Clones in
2002; filming the original
Star Wars in 1976.*



producer's stage," he remembers, "and the engineer said, 'Huh, interesting. We spent a couple of months trying to find a voice for your part because George really hates it.'" Lucas had imagined the droid as a used-car dealer from the Bronx. "But he had the generosity of spirit to change his mind. Had it not been for that, I wouldn't have been in *Episode V*," Daniels says.

A year later, he was back in L.A., sinking C-3PO's feet into the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He envied his avatar's popularity. On the street, he was never recognized as the robot, but in auditions he was recognized for nothing else. "People would be very disposed to think I was only 3PO," he says. "As the years went on, I was getting the sort of television roles that were not in any sense rewarding—the sorts where maybe there'd be an uncomfortable pause in the conversation if I weren't there." He played a pathologist in *Prime Suspect* and a priest in *I Bought a Vampire Motorcycle*.

That's not to say he wasn't in demand—as C-3PO. For all of Daniels's complaints about Lucas ("J.J. is more collaborative," he recently said), he still credits him as a marketing genius. "The clever thing that George did is what people have called 'the sandbox,'" he says. That is, Lucas let other creators play with the narrative, unleashing a universe of branded spinoff games and cartoons. Daniels has voiced most of them. He also consults on theme-park rides, writes for newsletters, narrates a touring *Star Wars* concert, and even gigs as a "visiting scholar" at an Imagineer-type program at Carnegie Mellon. At conventions, he finally gets to play a character other than 3PO—a self-consciously vainglorious emcee in the vein of a tidier, child-friendlier Ricky Gervais.

There's an edge to that character's charm, and to Daniels as well. He has a history of candid gripes over cast, crew, and costume. (See the recent *Metro* (U.K.) headline "Why C-3PO Ain't Too Popular With Fellow *Star Wars* Cast Members.") R2-D2's Kenny Baker once called him "the rudest man I ever met." Daniels usually avoids comment on Baker (as he did with me), but he has said that R2 "might as well be a bucket" and recently revealed that the three-foot-eight, 81-year-old Baker doesn't appear in *Episode VII* at all—credited only out of respect for a "talisman." (A Baker spokesman says that he did visit the set but only as a "consultant.") Yet C-3PO is a talisman, too. Every artifact of the old *Star Wars*, from the *Millennium Falcon* to John Williams's score to Princess-now-General Leia, is a talisman of retro

authenticity. Why else would you have Chewbacca played by a 71-year-old with two knee replacements?

What's really at stake for Daniels is what kind of talisman he is. Is he man or robot, the agent of his own destiny or just an exceptionally well-articulated collector's item? In a 2008 documentary, Baker remembered asking Daniels at a convention, "Why don't you and I go out on more of these and we'd clean up, just the two of us?" Daniels had begged off, saying, "I don't do many of these." That may sound snobbish coming from someone who lives entirely off cosplay. But maybe you could forgive an actor for distancing himself from nonspeaking players cast purely for their size.

"There are times I have felt belittled," says Daniels. "And I think occasionally it makes me overly pretentious, clever, didactic. I want somebody to know I've got a brain. Most people are allowed to wear their brain on their face, but my face

“People would
be very disposed
to think I was
only 3PO. I was
getting roles that
were not in any
sense rewarding.”

is hidden, and I do such a wacky job. People think, *What an idiot; what kind of actor would do a performance like this?* I like C-3PO, I'm very fond of him, and if anybody belittles him, they belittle me."

Harrison Ford warns against the common mistake of confusing Daniels with the droid. "He's greatly more sophisticated," says Ford, "and he's got a wonderful English sense of humor—dry, droll." That drollery can get Daniels into trouble, as it did in September when he told *The Daily Mail*, "What is funny is C-3PO looks the same—Harrison, Carrie and Mark, not so much ... Poor Mark. He was a young lovely looking lad when he was first Luke Skywalker and now ... well ..."

"I regret the way some of the things I've said have been misinterpreted," Daniels says now. "I try to be realistic, to balance gently the good with the not so good. Otherwise, I come off Pollyanna: 'Everything is awesome!' This sounds self-aggrandizing, but my sense of

humor can confuse some people if their synapses aren't ..." Daniels has a flair for meaningful ellipses. "I'm very fond of Mark, and I actually love the beard," he adds later, confirming the elusive Luke Skywalker's new facial hair.

Hurrying to Daniels's handsome Beaux-Arts apartment building, the one that neighbors the magnificent Georgian house, we return to the subject of his next-door life. "Would I like to be Benedict Cumberbatch onstage playing Hamlet? The responsibility night after night is huge, terrifying," he says. "I know there are people who do these things way better than I do." No regrets, then? "It's always tempting to have regrets," he says. "I would like to think that if that were the case, a second voice would come in. 'Yes, but aren't you lucky?'"

WE ENTER Daniels's spacious flat just in time for a big rugby match. Christine Savage, a former executive with an efficient blonde bob, offers beer and Parmesan crackers. She and Daniels married, after many years together, in 2013. The décor is spare but eclectic—walls and fixtures stormtrooper white, adorned with wall-mounted North African antique doors and muted modern paintings. There is only one *Star Wars* artifact, in a sitting room separated by French doors: a stocky, 18-inch yellow-brick Lego C-3PO.

That's where, during halftime, Daniels takes a few more questions—"Keep them short and I'll try to keep my answers long." Reportedly, I say, he's made millions. "Who says I've made millions?" It seems perfectly plausible. "It's not an extravagant life," he insists. "We're not here to talk about money, but if I appear in a commercial or a cartoon, yes, I get paid, because that's my job." He doesn't own the character. "In no way do I get a penny for every Lego brick that's sold."

Daniels dwells on the less tangible rewards of the franchise: security, recognition, belonging. "On group emails it now says 'Team Star Wars,' and that feels really good. Nobody's ever used that term before." Was there a single moment, I ask, when C-3PO, this golden cage that hobbled him for months and pigeonholed him for decades, became someone he could inhabit indefinitely? He traces an exponential curve in the air. "I have learned to love this. I've become attached to him, and I think he's fairly attached to me. And as you can see"—he gestures around the room, encompassing the Lego robot and the other accoutrements of his surprisingly uncluttered life—"there are benefits. A droid with benefits." ■

On Becoming a Pfefferman

TRANSPARENT's second season premieres December 11 on Amazon Studios.



IF SEASON ONE of Amazon Studios' breakout *Transparent* was ultimately about how life-affirming it was for L.A. patriarch Mort Pfefferman to transition to Maura, the new set of ten episodes is a little messier. That's especially the case for her children Ali, Josh, and Sarah, played by Gaby Hoffmann, Jay Duplass, and Amy Landecker, respectively. The trio spoke to us about their real-life preparations for the emotionally intense season ahead. **STACEY WILSON HUNT**

Some actors create elaborate backstories for their characters to help inform their roles. Given that you're playing siblings, did you all do that for the Pfeffermans?

GABY HOFFMANN: That would have been a really good idea to do if I were a serious

actor. I'm looking at Amy right now and thinking, *Fuck, we should have done that.* **JAY DUPLASS:** We work with [acting coach] Joan Scheckel, and one of the ways that she gets into that stuff—without coming at us with a bunch of “intellectual” ideas—is by putting us in a room together

for two days. We have these random physical and emotional interactions, and weirdly, what we get done in those two days feels like more than if Jill [Soloway, the show's creator] had written a novel about us.

AMY LANDECKER: We knew right away at the screen test that we had chemistry. It was as if we'd known each other our whole lives. We lucked out. **What's the worst thing your characters think about their siblings?**

HOFFMANN: Ali gives Josh a hard time for his inconsideration of his lady friends and Sarah for being out of it in the privilege-wealth department, even though Ali is just as privileged.

LANDECKER: Sarah feels Ali is superior to her in some way. And with Josh, she's annoyed that he's so close to Ali. She's jealous that the two of them are cooler than she is.

HOFFMANN: But it's all shifting as the dynamics and culture of the Pfefferman family are changed with Maura's coming out. In season two, Sarah

and Ali have a stronger connection than before, and Josh is sort of out there on his own. **Do you get the sense that Maura's transition has been inspiring to her kids? Or is it more conflicted than that?**

DUPLASS: When someone goes to the next level like she has, they've thrown down a gauntlet. She's going to do whatever the fuck she wants and be happy while we're all suffering. The trickiest part for the kids is they've never felt parented. With Maura becoming someone else, Josh feels even more abandoned. And it's connected to how Josh feels about his sisters. They're so charismatic, and that's part of his problem of why he can't meet women. He's always judging them based on the caliber of his sisters.

HOFFMANN: Aw.

LANDECKER: Actually, in this case, Jay is talking about Gaby and me in real life.

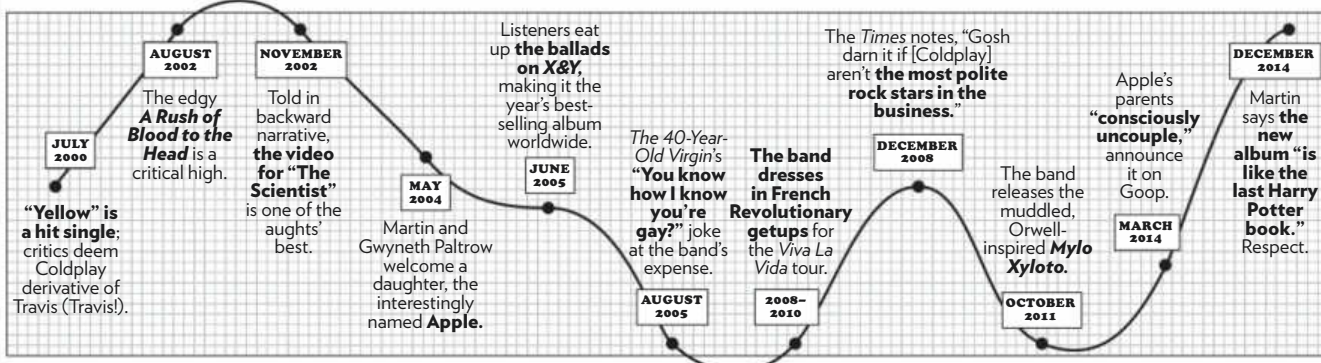
Has the show made you think differently about your own siblings?

HOFFMANN: We're not answering that!

The Coldplay Credibility Curve

A HEAD FULL OF DREAMS will be released December 4.

Arguably the biggest rock band of the aughts, Coldplay may soon be calling it quits, bringing a possible end to a career of a group whose commercial popularity was matched only by how popular Chris Martin & Co. were as a punching bag. Has any band had such an up-and-down relationship with credibility over the course of its career? Let us review! **JILLIAN MAPES**



Bringing Lazarus to Life

LAZARUS opens at New York Theatre Workshop on December 7.

“FOR THE FIRST quarter of an hour, I was thinking, *Here I am, this boy from Belgium, sitting opposite David Bowie,*” director Ivo van Hove recalls of his initial meeting with the rock idol, who would become his colleague on the new musical *Lazarus*. “But I was immediately aware he was searching for an artistic collaborator, not a fan—somebody who would push the production to the extreme.” *Lazarus* picks up the story of alien visitor Thomas Newton (played by Michael C. Hall) 30 years after the events of the 1976 sci-fi film *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (which starred Bowie). Of the 20 Bowie songs used, four are new compositions. “The songs are always there to drive the story,” van Hove explains. “There are more violent songs about the world outside, and then very romantic songs, about the longing for something more poetic and tender in life.” As you may be able to infer from the accompanying rehearsal photos, the story is told entirely within one setting, Newton’s apartment. “In an intimate space, things start to happen,” van Hove says. “It felt very good to be close to the actors. The relationship between an actor and director is a very intimate one, and a very physical one, too. My theater productions are not only about talking heads—they’re about talking bodies.”

REBECCA MILZOFF



Director Ivo van Hove (seated third from right) and creative team.



Music director Henry Hey (foreground) leads a rehearsal.



David Bowie and van Hove.





Cast member Cristin Milioti (foreground).



Milioti in costume.



Choreographer Annie-B. Parson, Milioti, and cast member Michael C. Hall.



Cast members Michael Esper and Bobby Moreno (background).



Cast members Sophia Anne Caruso, Hall, and Esper with van Hove.



Van Hove and Caruso (on bed).

The CULTURE PAGES

CRITICS

David Edelstein on *The Big Short* ... Matt Zoller Seitz on *Fargo* and *The Leftovers* ... Lindsay Zoladz on Adele's 25.

Brad Pitt



MOVIES / DAVID EDELSTEIN

Ocean's 2008

The Big Short turns the financial meltdown into a heist comedy.

 HOW DO YOU MAKE AN EXUBERANT COMEDY about the financial apocalypse of 2008 that also manages to elucidate—with documentary-like rigor—the labyrinthine fraud at the heart of the U.S. economy? It's a challenge that the director Adam McKay leaps to in *The Big Short* (see our story on page 28), which he adapted (with Charles Randolph) from Michael Lewis's book on the collapse of the subprime-mortgage market. It's a rollicking bad time!

McKay invents his own glorious goofball syntax: part business thriller, part stand-up comedy, with a liberal dash of NPR didacticism—as in the Peabody-winning “This American Life” episode “The Giant Pool of Money.” He has a master of ceremonies in Ryan Gosling's Deutsche Bank slickster Jared Vennett (based on Lewis's portrait of Greg Lippmann), who buttonholes the camera, explains how bankers went from “losers” to hotshots, and introduces characters like the misfit San Jose money manager Michael Burry (Christian Bale) and voluble New York hedge-fund manager Mark Baum (Steve Carell), both of whom bet against a booming housing market built on bad loans. Vennett stops the show for “explainer” sidebars that are the movie's glory: celebrities who spell out what's meant by such concepts as “mortgage-backed securities,” “collateralized-debt obligations” (CDOs), and “extrapolation bias.” It's important to follow along: The more you can cram into your mind, the more your mind will be blown by the titanic scope of the greed and illogic.

THE BIG SHORT
DIRECTED BY ADAM
MCKAY. PARAMOUNT
PICTURES. R.

The film's various heroes ignore conventional wisdom and risk everything for what they believe, and we root for them: We love to identify with mavericks, even (maybe especially) if in real life we follow the herd. But in this case there's a brilliant, nasty paradox at work. When we root for each man to be proved right and make a killing on cascading defaults, we're actually rooting for global economic collapse and the loss of our own money. We go, *Yes! They did it!!! They're rich!!!* And then: Oh. Shit. It's both a great narrative strategy—Why would we want to identify with us, the patsies?—and a window like no other into How Things Work in the infernal machine that is 21st-century capitalism.

To be fair, these men didn't create said infernal machine; they only recognized and profited from it. Bale's Burry (the only real name among the film's protagonists) is a socially awkward (on the Aspergian end of the spectrum) ex-neurologist who bops around his office-playroom waving a pair of drumsticks. He's the one who gets it first, who flies to New York to buy “shorts” from bankers who shoot stunned glances at one another while thinking, *Sure, we'll take your hundred million, heh-heh. Easy money!*

Bale plays him sweet and earnest, in his own world of impersonal projections, incapable of lying but seemingly untroubled by the morality of his investment: He's only fazed when the market doesn't collapse at the precise instant he knows it should, when it continues to be propped up by delusional thinking and he has to hold out against bosses who think he's destroying their firm. Will things go to hell in time to save his investment? Fingers crossed!

It's Carell's Baum (based on Steve Eisman) who's divided against himself, in it to win it but aghast at the chicanery and shortsightedness and the prospect of economic Armageddon. He still—as Vennett notes, with sadness and derision—has faith in the system. Baum's brother (also in finance) jumped off a skyscraper, and he can't shrug off the real-world consequences of what he does. Before making a deal with Vennett, Baum leads his team to Florida, where FOR SALE signs and idle bulldozers dot suburban neighborhoods with their empty McMansions. What shocks him even more is the joshing, nihilistic materialism of the young men who collect fat commissions on loans that they know will never be paid back. "They're not confessing," says one of Baum's assistants. "They're bragging." Even more appalling is the sequence in which Baum and Vennett travel to Vegas to get a close-up look at the industry packaging the loans. A scene in which Baum quizzes a smug CDO manager (clearly based on Wing Chau, whose libel suit against Lewis was dismissed) ends with one of the few applause lines. Baum hisses: "Short everything this guy has touched!"

Carell's Baum is capable of sitting still and focusing for short amounts of time but not of keeping his thoughts to himself. He always looks as if he is itchy in his skin and smelling bad things. It's a wonderful performance—peerlessly antsy. But the whole cast is terrific. Gosling sends up his own ingenuous good looks, and he has a funny, mocking rapport with Jeremy Strong, who radiates hostility as one of Baum's partners. Finn Wittrock and John Magaro are the film's other protagonists, a pair of fledgling Colorado investors who get wind of the potential windfall and turn for advice to their old mentor, Ben Rickert—Brad Pitt with a beard in his intellectual, Robert Redford-esque persona. Pitt (who also brought Lewis's *Moneyball* to the screen) co-produced *The Big Short* with Dede Gardner, and, as in *12 Years a Slave*, he gets to be the voice of decency, reminding his protégés that their fortunes will be made from the loss of investments, pensions, and houses. He scolds them for dancing.

Although McKay is best known for the slapstick Will Ferrell comedies *Anchorman*

and *Stepbrothers*, he has also shown a fair amount of political sass. He directed Ferrell in the barbed Broadway hit *You're Welcome, America: A Final Night With George W. Bush*, and he closed the 2010 Ferrell–Mark Wahlberg buddy-cop comedy *The Other Guys* with a chart of bonuses paid to executives at financial companies taking government bailouts. Reviewing that film, I wrote, "Maybe instead of another buddy-cop movie they ought to have made a comedy about an SEC dummy." This is close! *Dr. Who* vet Karen Gillan flexes her mile-long gams as the blithely unconscientious Securities and Exchange Commission agent with a yen for finance types—not a subtle character. More fascinatingly weird is Melissa Leo as the blinkered little Standard & Poor's analyst who's taken aback when Baum calls her out for giving triple-A ratings to triple-Z loans.

"If we don't give [the banks] what they want," she explains, "they will go to Moody's."

The Big Short ends with some pointed editorializing about the lack of consequences for the fraudsters who cost the country trillions, and I was going to complain about the movie turning preachy ... until I remembered having dinner in 2009 or thereabouts with some far-right-wing friends of my parents. The problem, they explained, was that the government had forced banks to give loans to minorities and immigrants. The problem was too much regulation. These are not the sort of people who'd see the director Charles Ferguson's *Inside Job* or any pinko documentary. But maybe they'll see this nutty, whooshy comedy (the best film of the year? Possibly ...) and choke on their popcorn. McKay's way of spinning this story gets us where we live. ■

TV / MATT ZOLLER SEITZ

Renewed Energy

Fargo and *The Leftovers* reinvent themselves in season two.



MUSICIANS LIKE TO SAY THAT second albums are often weaker than first albums, because you have your entire life to prepare for the first one and six months to make the second. Something like this rule obtains in TV as well. How many times have you seen a series perform strongly out of the gate, only to falter when it returned for another go-round? But it's the second season that often defines the character of a series. It's a test of inventiveness as well as of stamina, and very often when you look back on a long-running show that's mostly great, mostly terrible, or maddeningly inconsistent, you realize that season two is where the show's true potential (or lack thereof) started to come into focus. While I was rewatching *The Sopranos*, *Seinfeld*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, *The Simpsons*, and other canonical shows recently, it became clear that the series we think of when we say those titles were forged, or started to be forged, the second time around. Something about getting through the pop-culture furnace of season-one expectations unscathed makes showrunners and their teams

FARGO
FX, MONDAYS, 10 PM.

THE LEFTOVERS
HBO, SUNDAYS, 9 PM.



Ted Danson
in *Fargo*.

relax, stretch their legs, and take risks, sometimes big ones.

Season two of *The Sopranos* started, a touch self-consciously, with a montage scored to Frank Sinatra's "It Was a Very Good Year," but because the series had in fact enjoyed one of the very best inaugural seasons ever, it felt more like a promise of invention to come than an instance of a show patting itself on the back. What followed was a quieter, more disjointed, but more intuitive batch of episodes, an anthology of interrelated, forward-moving short stories in contrast to season one's blackly comedic novel, and the rest of the series ultimately owed more to season two than season one.

Sometimes the stench of the sophomore jinx is so strong that you can barely stand to tune in. One of the most notorious recent examples is *Homeland*, which had one of the strongest debut seasons in memory but stumbled when it came back and didn't untangle the messes it created for itself until season four. (It's almost as good as it's ever been right now.) Another is Fox's action series *Human Target*, which nailed an *Ocean's Eleven*-style, lighthearted-caper mood in season one but became disjointed and strangely mean-spirited in season two (a devolution that some speculated was owed to network tinkering that aimed to turn a critically acclaimed, modestly successful show into a hit). *Glee* had similar trouble sustaining. This has often been the case with projects by writer-producer Ryan Murphy; the high-school-musical drama's first season was perfect, on its own kooky and admittedly shameless terms, but in season two the seams in the concept had already started to show, and they only widened as the show moved into seasons three and four.

We've already seen quite a few promising series crater this year in their return engagements: *The Last Man on Earth*, already a one-joke premise that was pushing its luck, has been running on fumes this time out, and *Empire*, while still enjoyable, seems at once more brazenly ambitious (particularly in its satirical or politically provocative moments) and less coherent (the show's M.O. of giving audiences a finale-worthy explosion of melodrama every few minutes is getting tiresome, which is surely the opposite of the effect the producers wanted). Season two of *True Detective* was (legendarily) a disaster. Season one was tightly written and elegantly directed and benefited enormously from witty banter and strong comic chemistry between its leads; it was so compelling in total that viewers were willing to forgive some of the trashier, stupider, more predictable aspects. Season two had few compensatory virtues. It was a garbage

Dumpster filled with incoherent and repetitious plot devices and warmed-over dude-bro-noir moping; Colin Farrell's mustache was the most interesting character, and he shaved it off halfway through.

On the plus side, we've seen a lot of returning series step their games up to dazzling effect. In season two, the biblically inflected trauma drama *The Leftovers* changed locations, introduced a lot of new major characters, and complicated its already mesmerizing mythology; if it keeps reinventing itself from week to week in ways that further the show's themes rather than evade them, it could become one of the all-time great HBO dramas. *Black-ish* was one of last season's most delightful new sitcoms—one that was important for a lot of reasons but carried itself as if it were no big deal at all. Season two is already shaping up to be one of the finest second seasons in memory. From star Anthony Anderson's lead performance, which has become more brazenly Jackie Gleason-esque in its bigness, to the Norman Lear-influenced plotlines, which examine everything from handgun ownership and class resentment on Halloween to the sanctity of the barber-shop and the cultural politics of black hair care, it has become the rare comedy that takes bold leaps and nearly always sticks the landing. *Fargo*'s second season has widened the show's scope and deepened its style while strengthening its claim to not just being a Coen-brothers knockoff, or even a

Coen-esque show, but its own strange thing. All the elements you expect from the show are firmly in place, including eccentric monologues and eruptions of bloody, often mournful violence, and the show sprinkles every frame with Easter-egg-type references to Joel and Ethan's work (including UFOs). But the 1970s period details, such as split-screen montages, deep-cut rock and roll, and Ronald Reagan (played by Bruce Campbell), somehow feel like organic extensions of the series' gestalt rather than annoying attempts at quirk.

There have also been examples of shows where the critical jury might still be out on some of the changes from seasons one to two, but what's onscreen is fascinating enough that you're willing to follow wherever the writers lead. *You're the Worst* has pushed deeper into the psychology of its characters and become much darker than it was in season one, often at the expense of laughs; there are now a lot of moments when defining the show mainly as a comedy feels like a stretch. But a lot of supposed comedies have done that, in fascinating ways, and there's a precedent for notable shows that are more funny-poignant or funny-weird than just plain funny. As long as a show seems to be shape-shifting out of creative restlessness or a desire to surprise, and not to distract audiences from the fact it has nothing to say and nowhere to go, there is no such thing as a change for the worse. ■

POP / LINDSAY ZOLADZ

Adele's Golden Years

She's nostalgic for her slightly earlier 20s on 25.



ADELE FEELS OLD. A chill of mortality wafts through "Hello," the elegantly epic ballad that reintroduced her to the world a month ago: "It's no secret," she sings, luxuriating in the vowels that way she always does, "that the both of us are running out of time." It's there too on the sepia-toned torch song "When We Were Young," a vocal performance she delivers with the go-for-broke pathos of a late-career Judy Garland. Even on the most upbeat song on the 27-year-old's new album, "Send My Love (To Your New Lover)," she saucily wags a finger at an ex as if it were a clock's ticking second hand: "We both know we ain't kids no more."

Premature nostalgia is a natural part of anybody's late 20s, but on her third full-length album, Adele sounds particularly preoccupied with the passage of time. All of this backward glancing places her at odds with not only her contemporaries (it feels strange to consider that Adele is seven years younger than Beyoncé and four years younger than Katy Perry) but also a larger culture currently in a state of arrested development, when with each passing year we seem to be upping the age until which it's socially acceptable to still be living in our parents' proverbial basement. Something about Adele is anachronistic. Although it has all the poise, ennui,



Adele in the video for "Hello."

and emotional intelligence of a record by someone deep into her golden years, her new album, *25*, takes its name from the age that psychologists recently deemed, for her generation at least, the end of adolescence.

Of course, this has always been part of Adele's appeal for the millions and millions and millions of people who buy her records: She provides a living, breathing link to a (seemingly) more glamorous past. Her smashes "Rolling in the Deep" and "Rumour Has It" married the aesthetic of '60s soul and girl groups with the more modern 'tude of, say, Alabama Shakes front woman Brittany Howard. And, of course, universal tearjerker "Someone Like You" is one of those rare songs on which the word *timeless* is not wasted; I can plausibly imagine someone singing it a century in either direction from now. Adele's songs, and her ballads in particular, have unimpeachable aplomb. But when you watch her in any interview, or listen to her expletive-laden stage banter, she is—very charmingly—not like that at all. There's an unvarnished quality to Adele's personality that her music (sometimes tepid, sometimes transcendent) rarely captures. After her blockbuster record *21*, nobody was denying that Adele was one of her generation's best singers. But the great artistic hope that still beckoned was that one day she might find the kind of production and arrangements to match the grit of her voice and her personality.

On *25*, Adele has made an attempt to shake things up by working with some new collaborators. She co-wrote "When We Were Young" with indie newcomer Tobias Jesso Jr., and Bruno Mars assisted with the showstopping diva's anthem "All I Ask."

Even pop-radio whisperers Max Martin and Shellback show up for the playful, inevitable smash "Send My Love (To Your New Lover)." This variety makes *25* a more dynamic and ultimately satisfying listen from front to back than its predecessor, even if no single song quite matches the pair of modern classics that bookended *21*. A few come pretty damn close, though.

As just about everyone on the planet now knows, "Hello" is a great song. It's just cheeky and clever enough to recapture our attention after Adele's prolonged absence ("Hello ... it's me"), but there's also a gorgeous simplicity and spaciousness about it, the chorus ringing out with a crisp, mountainous echo—it's what the Ricola guy would sing at his *American Idol* audition. "All I Ask," too, is a jaw-dropper, complete with an acrobatic key change that showcases a new upper range Adele says she didn't even possess before her 2011 throat surgery. But even though it's a surefire hit, *25*'s greatest artistic risk is the wonderful "Send My Love (To Your New Lover)," because, for once on an Adele record, she dares to live in the present. Adele eagerly sought out Max Martin after she heard his work on Taylor Swift's "I Knew You Were Trouble," and here he performs a similar trick, staying true to the artist's signature quirks while streamlining them into something you can actually imagine listening to on a beach.

These moments when *25* steps ever so slightly out of Adele's wheelhouse, though, make its more conservative songs that much more disappointing. The snoozy piano ballads "Remedy" and "Love in the

Dark" feel like missed opportunities for further evolution. We've heard them before.

When "Hello" first came out, some people rolled their eyes at the fact that Adele—now a mother in a stable long-term relationship—was still milking her past heartbreak for new material. But *25* is full of confessions that she is the sort of person who has trouble accepting happiness at face value, always waiting for the other shoe to drop. "If you're gonna let me down, let me down gently," she sings on "Water Under the Bridge," a love song as trepidatious as it is joyful. She plumbs deeper on "River Lea": "Sometimes I feel lonely in the arms of your touch / But I know that's just me 'cause nothing ever is enough." These hesitations only make the final song, the twangy, soulful "Sweetest Devotion," sound like that much more of a celebration. She's at last letting all the light come pouring in through a hole she blew through her own roof with that chorus. This is the sleight of hand performed by Adele's music at its most powerful—vulnerability blared loud enough to become unquestionable strength.

"Everybody tells me that it's 'bout time that I moved on," Adele sings on "River Lea." "And I need to learn to lighten up and learn how to be young." Fair enough, but *25* is a kind of sonic boast that she doesn't need to do any of those things—and because it doesn't stray too far from her old-soul comfort zone, it's poised to be one of the most commercially successful records of the decade, if not more. Adele has aged gracefully, if predictably, from *21* to *25*. But God, one of these days, how I'd love to hear her pull a Benjamin Button. ■

25
ADELE
COLUMBIA RECORDS/
XL RECORDINGS.

PARTY LINES

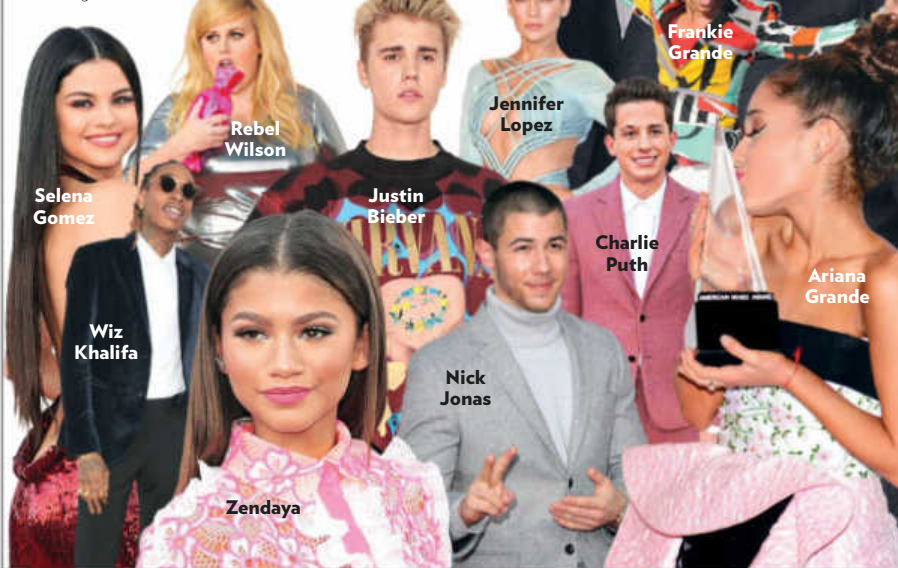
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—Terry Crews



What's the key to charades?

"Short clues. I try to get real Zen, make everything a haiku."



Justin Theroux



Elizabeth Rodriguez

"Total charades hack: If the phrase is Orange Is the New Black, point to me, quick!"

"I don't know if it's my rap roots, but I like to make a lot of rhymes."



Jerry O'Connell

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TANGENT

"Comedy-wise, I really like tipping. I like the arguments. I like the weirdness. I like the whispering. There's no tipping without whispering. 'How much should I give?' It's always done like it's illegal, for some reason. Like if you tip a car valet or a bellman, it all has to be done like we don't want to be caught."

—Jerry Seinfeld



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—Colin Jost



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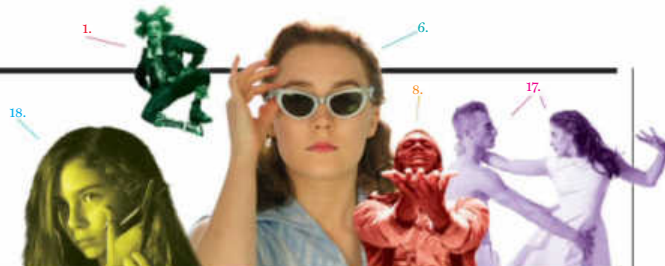
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To

The CULTURE PAGES

Do



Twenty-five things to see, hear, watch, and read.

DECEMBER 2-16

TV

1. Watch The Wiz Live!

Soon as you get home.

NBC, December 3 at 8 p.m.

The funky musical of *The Wizard of Oz* gets a live-TV performance (by the same folks behind *Peter Pan Live!*), which could mean we're in for another hatewatch, but with a cast like this it seems less likely: newcomer Shanice Williams as Dorothy, David Alan Grier as the Cowardly Lion, Elijah Kelley as the Scarecrow, Ne-Yo as the Tin Man, Uzo Aduba as the Good Witch, Mary J. Blige as the Wicked Witch, and Queen Latifah as the Wiz (arguably "as herself").

MATT ZOLLER SEITZ

POP

2. Go to Z100's Jingle Ball

'Tis the season to get turnt.

Madison Square Garden, December 11.

Think of this as the annual Christmas pageant at a school where everyone happens to be very, very famous. StubHub's your best bet to see performers like R&B golden boy the Weeknd, pop-rock heartthrobs 5 Seconds of Summer, vocal powerhouse Demi Lovato, and beloved new New Jersey rapper Fetty Wap.

LINDSAY ZOLADZ

ART

3. See Brice Marden: New Paintings and Drawings

Momentous work from an American master.

Matthew Marks, through December 24.

In this somber, enticing exhibition, Marden pushes the boundaries of his work in ways that open up fissures into his thinking. Widening spaces gap at the bottom of his paintings, marked with drips, while multipanel paintings recompose his color systems in new ways. Even his continuous

circuits now dart or wind across, not around, canvases. All combine into swelling morphological spaces that vibrate with unnameable color, like beautiful rivers of memory.

JERRY SALTZ

THEATER

4. See Kristine Nielsen in Hir

More is more.

Playwrights Horizons, through December 20.

Taylor Mac's gender- and genre-bending black comedy about the people liberation leaves behind requires a big central performance and gets it from Kristine Nielsen. But while Nielsen's full-frequency voice and spring-loaded eyes make her a shrine to maximalism, her searching intelligence, and ability to convey it onstage, suggest great subtlety beneath the fireworks.

JESSE GREEN

MOVIES

5.-7. See Room, Brooklyn, and Mockingjay Part 2

Sisters doin' it for themselves.

In theaters.

Instead of standing in line for a week with the fanboys to get into *The Force Awakens*, why not check out some of the most remarkable female performances of 2015? Start with the brilliant Brie Larson as a mother laboring to protect her 5-year-old from their horrific reality in *Room*. Move on to the luminous Saoirse Ronan in *Brooklyn* as an Irish immigrant who defies easy characterization: She's compliant and headstrong. And don't be put off by the monster-budget *Hunger Games* "franchise" built around Jennifer Lawrence: Her Katniss in *Mockingjay Part 2* is a marvelous portrait of a young woman who resists being turned into a caricature for propaganda.

DAVID EDELSTEIN

PHOTOGRAPHS: KERRY BROWN (BROOKLYN); MATTHEW MURPHY (KEIGWIN); COURTESY OF COHEN MEDIA GROUP (MUSTANG); MICHAEL BROSILOW/COURTESY OF BAM (STEEL HAMMER); KWAKU ALSTON/COURTESY OF NBC (WIZ)

NEW MUSIC

8. **Hear** Steel Hammer

Industrial strength.

BAM Harvey Theater,
December 2 through 6.

The composer Julia Wolfe has a soft spot for industrial brawn: She won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for her ode to coal miners, *Anthracite Fields*. Now she returns to her extended meditation on the ballad of John Henry with a staging by Anne Bogart. There will be banjos. JUSTIN DAVIDSON

POP

9. **Listen to** Little Mix's Get Weird

Big-voiced British ladies.

Sony.

It's taken America a long time to get on the Little Mix train, but they're finally gaining some buzz Stateside. More than three-quarters of the songs on their third album are winners; start with "The End," a bluesy declaration of the absolute end of a relationship, sung a cappella.

THEATER

10. **See** Sexism. Racism. Show Tunes. Discuss.

Musically incorrect.

The Greene Space, December 14.

The Encores! umbrella extends its reach again with Encores! Unscripted, a series of discussions and performances produced with WNYC. The first of the season looks at great musicals with less-than-great politics; Encores!'s Jack Viertel is joined by Jeanine Tesori, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, and Sheldon Harnick. J.G.

BOOKS

11. **Read** The Blizzard

Vladimir Sorokin's awesome absurdism.

FSG.

It'd be tempting to call this *The Master and Margarita* and *Zombies*, if Sorokin's brilliant fantasy-satire weren't so original and his political allegories so sadly current. Dr. Platon Ilich and his un-trusty guide, Crouper, riding into a snow-storm to cure a village of incipient zombies, bring to mind Beckett's tramps, but with funnier bickering and even trippier encounters.

BORIS KACHKA

MUSEUM SHOWS

12. **Learn About** The Secret World Inside You

It might turn your stomach.

American Museum of Natural History,
through August 14.

The microbiome certainly feels like the most exciting part of medical science right now, with so-kooky-they-might-actually-work advances (fecal transplants?). This wide-ranging exhibit encourages a deeper look at our insides. Zoom in on 17 animated microbial scenes, and get to know the friendly mites on your eyelashes.



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POP

13. **Hear** Neko Case

An encyclopedic evening.

Apollo Theater, December 4.

The sumptuously clarion-voiced singer just put out an impressive career-spanning vinyl boxed set called *Truckdriver*, *Gladiator*, *Mule*, and she's planned a small tour in support of it, which means her set list at the Apollo should be something of a retrospective. As *Truckdriver* ably proves, her back catalogue's an embarrassment of riches.

L.Z.

THEATER

14. **See** Phalaris's Bull

What does it all mean?

Beckett Theater, December 12 through January 16.

With philosophers under attack from Marco Rubio, it's about time we had a one-man theatrical event that offers a “solution to the world's pain,” based on the wisdom of Kierkegaard and his ilk. Self-proclaimed underground philosopher Steven Friedman serves up the deep thoughts.

J.G.

MOVIES

15. **See** Killing Them Safely

Stunning.

In theaters.

Nick Berardini's shocking doc was first called *Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle*, from the YA novel featuring a boy and his nonlethal proto-Taser. What's impressive about the film is that it opens with the high ideals of the Taser's creator and its current owners: It's a way to disable perps without killing them. But the force can be lethal, and there are hair-raising stats—and heartbreaking stories—to prove it.

D.E.

CLASSICAL MUSIC/PERFORMANCE ART

16. **See and Hear** Goldberg

Marathon listening.

Park Avenue Armory, December 7 through 19.

The real world does constant battle with the concertgoing experience: We rush from work, phones buzzing, and try to switch our brains and bodies into silent, focused alertness. The performance artist Marina Abramovic creates a kind of experiential airlock between the street and music here: Before Igor Levit plays Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, audience members stow their worldly possessions in a locker and sit in long, meditative silence.

J.D.

DANCE

17. **See** Keigwin + Company

With a big solo.

Joyce Theater, December 8 through 13.

Larry Keigwin's movement has a warm, easy humanity that always makes his troupe's performances far more relatable than most modern dance. Even so, this season should be special: Keigwin will dance a solo for the first time in ten years, alongside new work by young choreographers he's mentored.

REBECCA MILZOFF

MOVIES

18. See Mustang

It's France's Oscars submission this year.

In theaters.

In Turkish-French director Deniz Gamze Erguven's remarkable, harrowing coming-of-age film, five young sisters in a Turkish village on the Black Sea find that their free spirits run counter to the local conservatism. But far from your typical tradition-vs.-liberated-heroes narrative, Erguven's film portrays the insidious, corrosive paternalism of this world.

BILGE EBIRI



HOW TO LISTEN TO: Justin Bieber's 'Purpose'

Lindsay Zoladz guides you through the highlights of an uneven album.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Start with | ▶▶ "Sorry," an undeniable jam enlivened by playful production from Skrillex. |
| Move on to | ▶▶ "Love Yourself," a biting but tuneless kiss off, written with Ed Sheeran. |
| Slow things down with | ▶▶ The sleek R&B of "No Pressure," reminiscent of early Usher. |
| Finish with | ▶▶ "The Feeling," a soaring pop anthem with guest vocals from alt-pop star Halsey. |

ART

19. See Jennifer Bornstein's New Rubbing and Psychological Tests

Nothing is quite what it seems.

291 Grand St., through December 6.

A wall of drawings that at first seem like blueprints, skins, or diagrams, each in fact a rubbing of an everyday object. Across the gallery, white plaster contraptions turn out to be props for a rat circus—a maze, a running wheel, a tightrope—set up and then filmed as rodents made their ways through. In this compelling artist's new show, the rubbings and the rodents come together in the mind, creating an inner-encyclopedia of behavior, design, the little things of life, and a lot of mystery.

J.S.

TV

20. Watch Very Semi-Serious: A Partially Thorough Portrait of 'New Yorker' Cartoonists

Let the light chuckles begin.

HBO, December 7 at 9 p.m.

Director Leah Wolchok's slight but disarmingly likable documentary looks at some of the magazine's most prolific and beloved cartoonists through the lens of their editor, Bob Mankoff. Along the way we get a survey of the tropes, clichés, and familiar images that make a *New Yorker* cartoon a *New Yorker* cartoon. Roz Chast, Emily

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November 17th - December 31st

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warm this winter.
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Flake, Liana Finck, and Edward Steed serve as delightfully eccentric foils to Mankoff, and there are some great bits about the magazine's place within (and apart from) the city whose name it bears. M.Z.S.

THEATER

21. See Plaid Tidings

In excelsis Day-O.

York Theatre Company at St. Peter's,
December 8 through 27.

In *Forever Plaid*, the '90s Off Broadway revue celebrating guy groups of the 1950s, a close-harmony quartet reassembles after being killed in a bus crash. Now, still dead, they're back with a holiday concert with daredevil carol arrangements and a Caribbean Christmas tribute. J.G.

NEW MUSIC

22. Hear Split

Mega-music.

David Geffen Hall, December 10 through 12.

Composer Andrew Norman has been churning out the orchestral equivalent of action movies—big, explosive works with monosyllabic titles (*Play*, *Switch*). Jeffrey Kahane gives the world premiere of Norman's most recent blockbuster, the piano concerto *Split*, with the Philharmonic, cushioning it between a Beethoven symphony and a Strauss tone poem. J.D.

POP

23. Listen to Lelf's Riot Boi

No one's making music like this.

XL/Terrible.

It feels like we've spent a thousand years waiting for the debut album from the rap iconoclast Lelf, but finally it's arrived listing a diverse array of producers. Start with Evian Christ and Lunice's "Umami/Water," a single that's part rubbery trap banger dedicated to trans activism, part warped fever dream riffing on "Misirlou."

PHOTOGRAPHY

24. Go to Snapshot

Lens into the past.

Tenement Museum, December 4 at 6:30 and 8 p.m.

The impeccably preserved rooms of the Lower East Side's Tenement Museum would make any Instagrammer snap-happy. There's usually a no-photos rule on premises, but for one night the ban will be lifted; capture the museum's historic rooms and German saloon (with free local snacks!) to your heart's content.

BOOKS

25. Read Lisa McGirr's The War on Alcohol

Blame it on the ...

W.W. Norton.

Prohibition is typically invoked as a cautionary tale about the limits of any war on vice. Harvard historian McGirr wants to reinstate it as a pivotal piece of American history, marking the start of our national split into possibly permanent social factions. B.K.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

do, but they were bankers. If you were a dolphin, if you had no arms and no legs and fins and you were chunked in the ocean, what would you do differently? You would do what dolphins do and swim around and squirt water and meet other dolphins. And there's probably some whole other layer of what they do that we don't know about and probably dolphins can be greedy and gossipy. We would never know." He pauses, aware he was off track. Anyway. "When I met with them, I really knew we have the movie because a bunch of them have like thousand-yard stares; a bunch of them are still, you know, really fucked up," he says. "These guys really believed in the free market, and what they saw was that it was bullshit, and they were freaked out."

Steve Eisman, Danny Moses, Vincent Daniel, and Porter Collins wouldn't use the words *fucked up*, but they were certainly shaken. "When you realized you were right, and you were looking into the abyss, it was really scary," says Moses. The guys from Cornwall Capital have taken up reform like a crusade: A few years ago, they tried unsuccessfully to sue the ratings agencies for slapping high ratings on bonds they knew were junk.

"I felt I was watching a plane crash," Michael Burry tells me. "I actually had that dream again and again. I knew what was happening, but there was nothing I, or anyone else, could do to stop it. The last day of 2007, I couldn't come home. I was in the office till late at night. I couldn't calm down. I wrote my wife an email and just said, 'I can't come home, it's just too upsetting what's happening,' and I didn't want to come home to my kids like this ... I am shocked that executives at some of the worst lenders were not punished for what they did. But this is the nature of these things. The ones running the machine did not get punished after the dot-com bubble either—all those VCs and dot-com executives still live in their mansions lining the 280 corridor on the San Francisco Peninsula. The little guy will pay for it—the small investor, the borrower. Which is why the little guy needs to be warned to be more diligent and to be more suspicious of society's sanctioned suits offering free money.

It will always be seductive, but that's the devil that wants your soul." All of them pointed to the current bitter, mistrustful political atmosphere as a direct result of Americans' loss of faith in systems.

Even Greg Lippmann, who in 2006 infamously handed out T-shirts to his clients emblazoned with *I'M SHORT YOUR HOUSE*, had allegedly developed a new sensitivity. "He was like, 'Yeah, it's bullshit,'" says McKay.

Lippmann did not make himself available for comment, but according to a spokesman, he's recovered. "He's running a \$3 billion hedge fund, so I'd say he's doing all right," he informs me over speakerphone. "Hasn't had a down year!"

IN THE BEGINNING, banking wasn't a job you went into to make large sums of money," Ryan Gosling says in the film, sitting at a desk on a sepia-toned '70s trading floor in a flashback to the invention of the first mortgage bond, looking out at the audience. "It was a fucking snooze."

One of the sound people in the editing bay at Paramount Studios hit a PAUSE button. "We changed some sync," she said. "His face wasn't really saying 'fucking snooze.'"

"Great," said McKay, accepting a Gatorade brought in by an assistant. He was a little hungover: The night before, they'd shown a near-final cut of the movie to a test audience, and afterward they'd gone out to celebrate. "One person said, 'That's the crappiest I have ever felt while laughing a lot,'" he said proudly.

In the beginning, banking was a fucking snooze. But according to the audience, the movie was not. They laughed in all the right places, and got quiet in the third act, when it all goes to shit. "Yeah, the ending," said McKay, nodding. "Initially people were like, 'Too grim?' But what else do you do?"

Michael Lewis, who was in the audience, cited a quote of William Dean Howells's, "that all the American public wants is a tragedy with a happy ending." This is sort of the opposite: "a comedy with an unhappy ending," he said.

Now, in the final edit, McKay watched it all play out again: the FrontPoint guys on the steps of the cathedral, Hank Paulson sweating on TV, slow-motion of homeless people under a bridge, and, as a little bit of relief, a scene in which the Ryan Gosling character plays out what should have happened instead of what actually did. ("A lot of people went to jail ... Just kidding!") At the end, title cards with a "Where are they now?" quality lead up to an old-school, discomfiting McKay wallop: Michael Burry, the last title card informs the audience, is currently focusing all of his trading on one thing:

water. "That was really creepy, because that's what he was doing when I was finishing the book," said Lewis. "And I thought, *Water? Of course, now I know what he's talking about.*"

This was an important point for McKay, in that it brought the movie into the present and gave it a wider meaning. "I don't think this movie is just about banking," he said. "I think it's all connected. It's about oil companies, and for-profit education, and how a system goes wrong, how does a system operate, what happens to people who see it, and who are our heroes, really? How are we judging them?"

It's also a personal interest: Lately, before McKay and his wife go to bed, he's been talking about climate change, in particular a paper from Stanford he read last summer about the sixth mass extinction. He's thinking he might do a movie about it next. "It would be serious," he said. "But with some cool stuff." Then again, he's also interested in an immigration narrative. "Do you think there's a way to do a movie about immigration that's a comedy, and yet people who were anti-immigration would go see it and be able to watch it and to some degree enjoy it?" he asked me. "Like, can that happen? You could certainly do it by hiding the message or having it just be part of what you were creating, but could you do it up front?"

As he's mulling it over, the sound editor approaches. "The Caesars line," she says. "Stephanie said she didn't really hear it last night, and I just wanted to make sure, did you feel like you heard it?"

McKay cocks his head. "I'm not sure," he says. "Can we listen to it real quick?"

They cue up the scene, in which a guy from one of the funds confronts an SEC employee in Vegas who's flirting across the pool with a guy she knows from Goldman Sachs. "Come over here!" the character shouts. "What are you doing at Caesars?"

"I can hear it," McKay says of the conspicuous name-dropping. "Can you hear it?"

I can, but I'm confused. Caesars is part of a multibillion-dollar corporation owned by some of the biggest names on Wall Street, notably TPG and Apollo Global Management, the leveraged-buyout firm headed by a former bigwig at Drexel Burnham Lambert that over the past several years has loaded up Caesars with so much leverage it fell into bankruptcy. These days, it's a banquet for hedge funds, which are making money off it using, guess what, credit-default swaps.

Do you need to mention Caesars, I ask?

"Yeaaaaah, we might have said we would," says McKay, sounding slightly sheepish about his own corporate capitulation. It's a little surprising, given everything he's talked about. Then again, like he said, these days, there's no such thing as a clean hero. ■



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

The police seemed to return to the Western District, and to work. In July, there were nearly 2,500 arrests citywide, and in August a little more than 2,300, totals that were within the range of what the city had come to experience as normal. Russell noticed another change: Now, when he brought out the Fun Wagon, beat cops would stop when they drove past, stay for five minutes, throw a basketball around.

The spring had been for outrage. The summer was for activism. The NAACP opened a satellite office in Sandtown-Winchester in West Baltimore, and soon it seemed like every church and family foundation was hosting a youth summit, or extending a summer program, or holding a teach-in about the civil-rights era. The megachurch pastor Jamal Bryant was staging protests that shut down highways. Rawlings-Blake established a panel to rename monuments and streets dedicated to figures from history who had supported slavery or opposed civil rights, and momentum gathered in the City Council to reopen recreational centers in the city's poor neighborhoods that had been closed. Rawlings-Blake's support among voters had weakened, and the speculation was over who would challenge her from the left: perhaps the councilmember Nick Mosby, or Sheila Dixon. In July, Rawlings-Blake fired Batts as police commissioner and elevated a community-policing proponent named Kevin Davis to replace him, and the question in the *Sun* the next day was what had taken her so long.

Meanwhile, the events of late April were undergoing a nomenclature revision. Where first they had been called the Riots or the Protests and then—at least by some—the Uprising, now a new term emerged, almost militantly banal: the Unrest. It was employed with particular savvy by Mosby, who represents much of West Baltimore in the City Council and is married to prosecutor Marilyn Mosby, and who therefore needed to stand on all different sides of the negotiation between power and vio-

lence and safety in the city. The Unrest was euphemistic, nearly meaningless, but it had an air of willed resolution. The violence, the radicalization, the police abdication—this had all happened in a discrete point in time, now confined to the past. On September 11, Rawlings-Blake held a press conference to announce that she would not run for reelection, she made a particular point of defending her cool mien. “I don’t hear a lot about elected officials that are men talking about whether they smile a lot,” she said.

All of the public talk in the city was about unity. The pleas to end the violence were by that point ubiquitous. But just as all of Baltimore pondered the mystery of how a progressive city could produce such a despotic police force, a second mystery had presented itself: If everyone was organized to prevent violence, why did it continue to happen? The cops were back at their posts. The whole city had been politicized. The poorest streets were filled with activist group meetings and sermons. The gangs were professing nonviolence. Still, the murders continued.

THERE ARE FOUR neighborhoods in Baltimore in which ex-gang members are employed to interrupt street disputes before they mature into slaughter. The program, called Safe Streets, uses a protocol developed in Chicago, and its theory is that violence acts like a contagion, in cycles of revenge, and that it can be stopped before it spreads. The men who work for Safe Streets are not police, and their motives can be complicated: It is said that when a new hire starts work as a violence interrupter, an old friend of his always seems to soon be killed, and he has to endure an internal dialogue between his old ways of reacting and the new ones that he has been professing. This summer, a handgun that had been used in a shooting was found stashed in a Safe Streets office, causing a minor scandal and a temporary closure. But the program also offered another aperture into the closed network of violence in Baltimore, and so in September the Park Heights Safe Streets office hosted visitors from Johns Hopkins and the Centers for Disease Control, each inquiring about the rash of homicides.

Some theories had been suggested: Maybe the drugs stolen from the pharmacies had fueled a free-for-all. Maybe a few bad apples were to blame. Neither of these ideas had purchase among any

of the violence interrupters, whose views were more systemic. They were focused not just on the men who ran the corners but the kids who sat watching, ready to come up behind. Any 8- or 9-year-old boy on a given block, said Dante Barksdale, an outreach worker at the Park Heights Safe Streets office, could tell you that block’s outlaw history: “Who used to be the big man, who was his lieutenant, who he killed, who got sent off to prison, going back to the 1980s, the 1990s.”

Murders are emotional matters, and they betray an emotional history. Often, after the violence interrupters heard that some young man was angry, once they inserted themselves physically into his path and took him out for a drink, they found that his basic trouble was not with another drug crew but with some domestic humiliation: an inability to pay the rent, or to support a child. There was an element of self-loathing. “He might be ready to take it out on someone else,” said a Safe Streets staff member named Paul Frazier. “That’s a lot of my mediations. Happens all the time.”

The kind of information that the violence interrupters seek is different from what the police usually solicit, because they are interested in crimes that have not yet happened: Who in the neighborhood was agitated, and how badly, and at whom? Who had lost hope? This meant they were especially attuned to the psychological currents that followed the protests. “This summer, during the Uprising, I saw young people more frustrated than I’ve ever seen them,” said James Timpson, Barksdale’s superior. The emotional conditions in which a distraught young man walks toward a police line crying, “Shoot me! Shoot me!” are the very same ones that would catch the notice of Timpson’s men.

Barksdale mentioned one source of tension the interrupters were working to defuse. A man had just been released from prison, where he had served more than a decade for murder, and had returned to his old neighborhood. The victim’s son, now in his early teens, had become aware that his father’s murderer was in the neighborhood and had mentioned the fact to some friends of his. One of the friends had a family connection to the paroled murderer, and so the murderer knew that the son knew that he was around.

The interrupters had met both the man and the boy. Barksdale believed that the man wanted to go straight, and the boy was a good kid, by nature given to following rules and heeding advice.

Nevertheless, it had become a situation. The expectation that the boy might try to avenge his father's death meant that both the man and the boy had reason to believe the other might try to kill him. To live in a place with a memory of violence makes it possible to be incarcerated in someone else's past.

One idea that circulated nationally this summer was that places like these, with a history of violence, need more policing, not less. The Los Angeles *Times* journalist Jill Leovy's book *Ghettoside* argued that these communities feel abandoned by the police because the crimes that occur within them are often left unsolved. The historian Michael Javen Fortner's *Black Silent Majority* explained that the initial push for a heavier police presence in minority communities often comes from residents, who need protection. Baltimore could seem an experiment that confirms the thesis: The police pulled back, and in the void there was slaughter.

But in Baltimore, the murder rate did not drop much even after the police returned, which complicated the thesis. Russell told me that he believes 15 percent of the city's police force are what he called "vocational," people who see themselves as serving rather than containing their communities. Another 15 percent are problems. The remainder, seven in ten, could go either way. A neighborhood might get lucky in the cops it draws, or it might not. Many people in Baltimore, from many walks of life, told me that the city would benefit from more policing. They were not always so sure that it would benefit from more police.

Not every city starts from the same place. The homicide tallies reset each January, but the memories don't. Baltimore was in one of the few Union states that permitted its citizens to hold slaves, the seat of the John Wilkes Booth conspiracy, the rare northern city in which housing discrimination was codified by the City Council in laws that mapped out block by block which race could live where, a place where the great cultural institutions (the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, the Goldseker Foundation) are named after real-estate tycoons who built their fortunes in racial blockbusting. The city still has only one subway line, though six were once planned, the ambitions collapsing amid strenuous suburban opposition. Many neighborhoods, far from jobs, have withered. In Freddie Gray's Sandtown-Winchester, about 30 percent of the houses are vacant.

The main civic action in Baltimore right now—the movements against violence by the police, the protesters, the pastors, and the interrupters—is not aimed at this legacy, because they can seem too distant to control. The present work takes place along a different plane, of mentoring and preaching and intervening. These are exercises in emotional management.

Things had accrued during the summer: not just crimes but, in their wake, grievances. All of those robberies and shootings, unresolved by the police, were causes for retaliation. "There's a lot of beefs in Baltimore right now," a Safe Streets worker observed. There were 27 murders in September. There were 34 in October. The pace was still one a day. As Thanksgiving approached, homicides totaled more than 300, up more than 50 percent over the previous year and the highest since 1993. Shootings had increased by 80 percent. In chronological terms, the Unrest was a blip, but it created a long line of powerful events. It came from one, too. Memory is the mood in which violence takes place. Often it is also the mechanism. To pacify a violent community is to persuade it to forget.

ALTHOUGH THE FALL, Russell kept up his vigilance. On Thursdays, he supervised training for police chaplains, a program that he had greatly expanded; he wanted neighborhood pastors and imams riding with beat cops all over the city in order to strengthen the connections between the people and the police. Russell sat in the back of a classroom while an instructor quoted Malcolm Gladwell, discussed implicit bias, and explained how well-meaning young police officers become accustomed to violence and how the tension can make them violent, too. On as many Friday evenings as he could, Russell walked the West Side. On Saturdays, he spoke at community-violence summits, and on Sundays, he preached, sometimes at his church and sometimes at others. At night, he drove back to his home in the suburbs. When Freddie Gray died, Russell had had fewer than a dozen police to work with; now he had several times as many.

Russell is more certain now than he was then that the city could be fixed and that he knows how to do it. The problem of police violence echoes the problem of street violence: Memory matters there too. "I think there's a lot of undiagnosed trauma," Russell told me. He recalled

the first time he saw a homicide victim: "a 16-year-old kid with his head blown open, brain splattered. I looked at one officer, my partner, and he looked like he was fine. I looked at the other one, he looked like he was fine. I wasn't fine. But because they appeared to be fine, if I wanted to be a part of this police family, I better get fine real quick. And before I could even process it, I was at my next trauma situation." Russell continued: "We live in a city that has learned to coexist with trauma. The problem is all of us coexist with it poorly."

Russell had grown more optimistic. The expansion of his unit and influence, and the training he presided over, suggested to him that the number of vocational cops might one day expand, that the trauma can be interrupted. "If they had let us go to the Western District from day one," he said, "we would never have had the Freddie Gray incident." Russell believes that the police can be taught to be conscientious. He also knows that violence moves in ways that are beyond even a conscientious cop's control.

On the last day of August, I called Russell on his cell phone. When he picked up, he sounded strained. "It's a very bad time," he said. "Family emergency." One of the colonel's sons, Melvin Russell Jr., had been arrested and charged with stabbing a 49-year-old man earlier in the day, killing him.

It fell to Russell to tell his wife and all of their other children. Something like this had not been expected, but it was not entirely a surprise. "Schizophrenia skips a generation," Russell said eventually. For his whole life, his own father had been a distant, introverted figure. Often, he'd worked more than one job, packing boxes or working as a janitor, and whenever he lost one he'd get another. In 1998, when he died, Russell discovered that his father had been a diagnosed schizophrenic. "Certain things started to make sense." Russell had several sons of his own by this point. Eventually Melvin Jr. was exhibiting all the signs: pacing late at night, laughing without reason. At 19, the boy was diagnosed and went to live with a succession of relatives. Within a few years, he was hearing voices. From then on he was medicated, under the care of doctors. He "had all those advantages," Russell said. The man Russell Jr. had killed was his roommate; they lived together in an apartment in Southwest Baltimore. The victim, Theophilus Ruffin, was the 34th and final homicide statistic in Baltimore that month. ■



What Comes After

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

with or someone who was clearly high at that very moment, and it would hit him—first, a pang of jealousy. Then, slowly, he'd work to remind himself of all the shit that came with the joy.

In those early months, the craving was physical. Now it was contained mostly to his brain, so he could talk his way down more easily. But there were times he'd toyed with the idea of shooting up, especially toward the end of the month, when the drug had partially worn off. "It's weird," he said. "It's sort of like there are two halves of my brain. One is, *This shit's bad, my life is good. I might struggle sometimes but* blah, blah, blah ... And there's the other half that's like, *I love heroin. This shit is amazing. Don't worry about anything else.*"

Maybe if you had grown up in a town where the main industries seemed to be real estate and antiques; maybe if you'd never been good at school or at least not very interested; maybe if your dad believed so strongly in the sanctity of childhood and the goodness he saw in you that he pretty much let you roam free and feral; and maybe if your mother was 4,000 miles away and you never stopped missing her; maybe if you'd always felt a little insecure; maybe if as long as you could remember you'd been curious about drugs, you'd wanted to feel big and warm and expansive and confident; maybe if you'd already tried marijuana and cocaine and LSD and mushrooms and oxycodone and MDMA and crack and basically everything you could get your hands on; maybe it wouldn't seem like a big deal to shoot heroin. Maybe you would have done it, too.

And maybe you would have felt like Superman from the moment the needle pricked the skin and that itchy burn like liquid Red Hots spread through your veins; maybe you'd feel invincible; maybe you'd finally feel like you could breathe.

It is much easier to tell the story of addiction than of what happens after. Addiction is the stuff of movies: self-destruction; brushes with death; villains; the chance of rescue, redemption, salvation. But for those who make it out, the rest of the narrative, the long, hard work of putting together a life—it's much less compelling stuff. It's what the rest of us do

every day in one way or another. And it is mostly boring and exhausting and not so much fun, or else the fun is at the margins of the tedious, the brief moments between work and bills and child care and doctors' appointments and grocery shopping and cooking and laundry. The bigger meaning is in there, someplace, but it can be hard to find. Adulthood can sometimes feel like an endless series of administrative tasks, of just getting by, even when we are not grappling with our demons, even when our demons are not particularly menacing.

AT DINNER, GRAHAM and Gabriel discussed the oldest addicts they'd known, the agony of withdrawal. We talked about more mundane things, too, like child-rearing, but the conversation had a way of snaking back toward heroin. Gabriel had said he loved movies, and when I asked about his favorites, he told me he really likes ones about drugs, which prompted a discussion of which films and shows were the most realistic. (*Requiem for a Dream* got the desperation of wanting to cop right; the dealers in *The Wire* were spot-on.) I asked Gabriel what he thought he might like to do with his life.

"People always ask me that," he said. "What do you want to do when you grow up?" I've been so caught up in just going through all this stuff that I haven't even had ... I always thought it would be awesome to be in film, to be part of creating something. Something like Graham's doing. You love photo. And that's what you do for a living. I'd love to find something I really love to do." I didn't say then that even if you are lucky enough to do something you love, you will still, from time to time, look at your life and find it lacking. You'll bang around the rooms of your mind, knocking over furniture, grasping for the exit.

As we finished our burgers, Gabriel talked about missing the social part of his old life, the way his friends would run around together on a mission to get fucked up. "A lot of things are boring, and that life is exciting and you're taking risks," he told me. "Getting up and working a normal job, that shit is lame." And yet it was exactly that banality that he aspired to. "You gotta put in your time to earn a living, to pay your bills, to take care of all your responsibilities," he said. "It's almost like I was in a bad accident, and I had to relearn how to talk and walk and stuff."

THE FIRST TIME Gabriel got high while on Vivitrol was two weeks after his seventh injection. In Janet's telling, a friend who was also on the drug discovered that he could get a decent high just a few weeks into the

monthly cycle, and he convinced Gabriel to join him. (Percy Menzies, whose addiction-treatment clinic in St. Louis has treated more than 6,000 patients using Vivitrol, told me that it's exceedingly rare to successfully get high before day 21 of the drug's 28-day cycle.) Then his insurance lapsed, and he couldn't afford to pay for the \$1,500 injection out of pocket. Soon after, Janet said, his car broke down and the girl he'd been seeing moved to Florida. And just like that, he was using heroin regularly again, even though he hated it and hated himself for doing it. He came to Janet's office in tears, because he'd failed and because he didn't think he could go through the ten days of detox again. Janet helped get him into a methadone program. Even getting him to that first appointment felt to her like a minor miracle. Gabriel had driven to the clinic dope-sick, and his GPS had gotten him lost. He missed his time slot and was told to come back a week later. He called Janet panicked. "There was so much bad heroin going around he was terrified he was either going to overdose and die or get arrested," Janet told me. She managed to get him in to see the doctor, and he texted her later: "I got it. I'm ok. I'm alive." I could hear her voice crack as she recounted the story on the phone. "It was like a car chase, life and death," she said. "I can't even talk about it. I'm too close to it still. These kids are fighting for their lives."

When I asked Gabriel why he relapsed, he was dismissive at first. "I'm no good. I'm an addict. That's why." A little later, he was more circumspect. "It's hard to explain how I hate it so bad and yet why can't I just say no? It's just a wild thing to fathom, you know? It breaks my heart to be going through this." He suggested that maybe he wasn't ready for Vivitrol. "With the methadone, you're still sort of feeding that hunger for the opiates. The Vivitrol is like a full-blast kick to nothing. I think that was good for me, but it also panicked me in a way." But he said he was grateful for those eight drug-free months. "It allowed me to get a taste of what life was like completely sober. It was the happiest I've ever been."

That night back in March, over dinner, Gabriel had told a story he'd heard about euphoric recall. A term from substance-abuse literature, it describes the way addicts will remember their highs, all of the good parts and none of the bad. One guy in Gabriel's group therapy who had been sober a long time now, who had the wife and the career and the stability, said that at the beginning, his memory of the high was an inch from his face, so close he could feel it, but slowly it receded, until it became like the moon. It hangs over him still, but he wouldn't know how to touch it if he tried. ■

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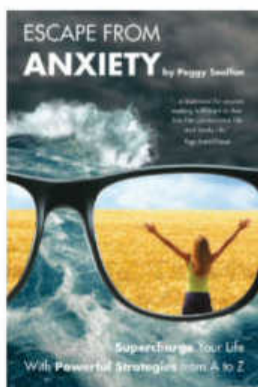
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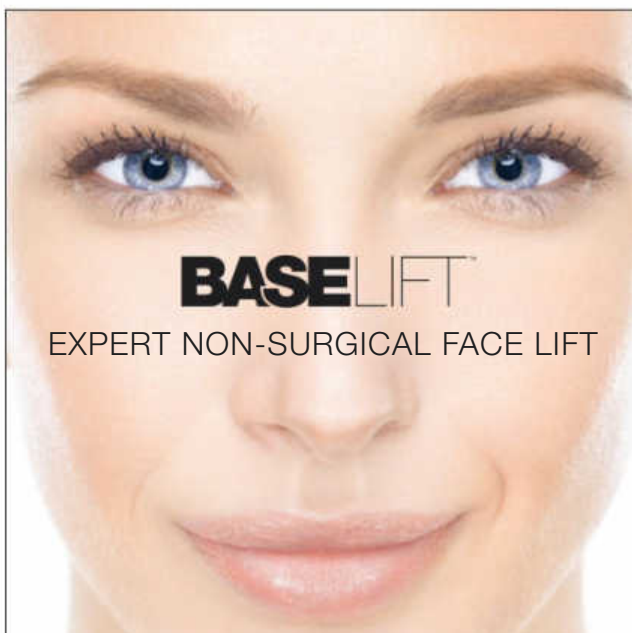
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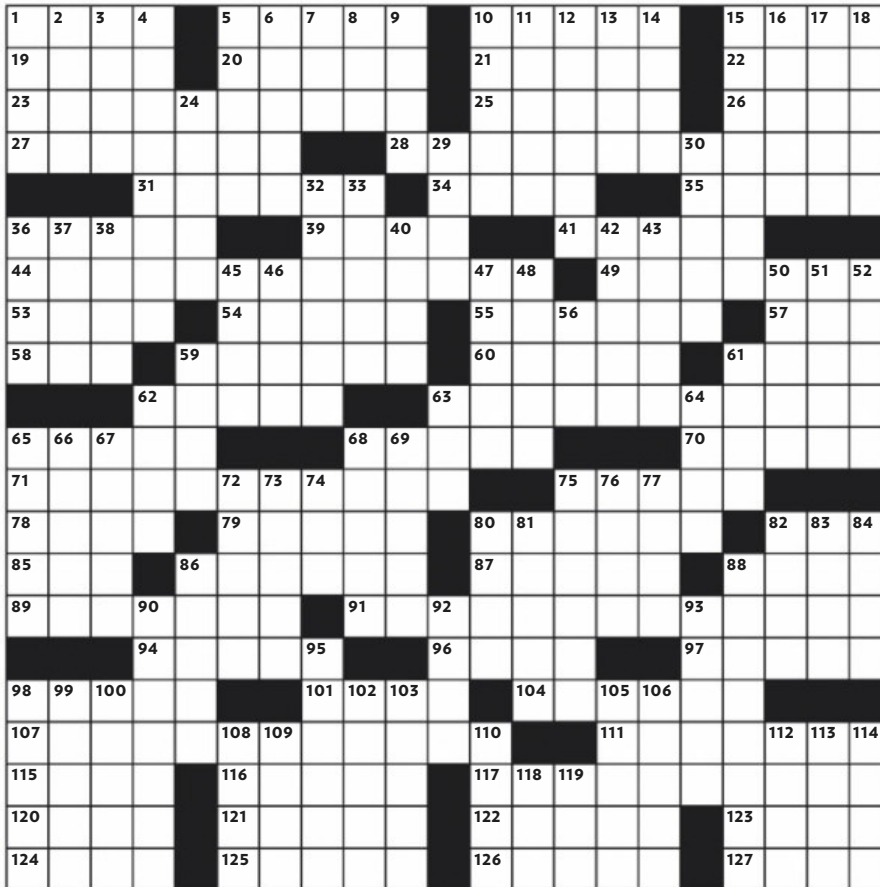
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School Prank

New York Crossword by Cathy Allis



Across

- 1 Tyne or Tim
- 5 Rascal
- 10 Queried
- 15 Cuba Libre ingredient
- 19 Former Mets player Moises
- 20 Ear-related
- 21 Lamb Chop puppeteer Lewis
- 22 A bit smashed?
- 23 Texas school's stadium?
- 25 Drinks to excess
- 26 Foot care job, briefly
- 27 Brewed, as tea
- 28 Images of a New Jersey school?
- 31 Teacher's plan
- 34 Celestial bear
- 35 Actors Ken and Lena
- 36 Fervency
- 39 Glad rags
- 41 Close call
- 44 Manhattan school in "Best Value" rankings?
- 49 Vanity spree
- 53 Storage containers
- 54 Susan's "Thelma and Louise" costar
- 55 Country estates
- 57 Noteworthy period

- 58 Brouhaha
- 59 Big San Simeon surname
- 60 Culprit in some food recalls
- 61 Campus bigwig
- 62 Applesauce brand
- 63 What students and grass may do at a Boston-area school?
- 65 Perch at a bar
- 68 ____ Amboy, New Jersey
- 70 Football great Grier
- 71 Maine school VIP?
- 75 Go and Uno
- 78 Tennis champ Roddick
- 79 Tosses high
- 80 Retro frosh cap
- 82 Unruly 'do
- 85 Garland given in greeting
- 86 French existentialist
- 87 Thirty-year senator Specter
- 88 15-Across, for one
- 89 Make believe
- 91 Like a Rhode Island school professor, at times?
- 94 Alleged Soviet spy Hiss
- 96 Lip-curling look
- 97 Phone menu imperative
- 98 Alphanumeric computer acronym
- 101 Key in a sea
- 104 Honeybunch

- 107 Result of a Manhattan school's move?
- 111 Old fashioned sun blocker
- 115 Comedian Sahl
- 116 Pie-impact sound
- 117 Attend a Philadelphia school?
- 120 Roof overhang
- 121 Leather with a nap
- 122 Part of GPA
- 123 Conclusion start
- 124 Skeleton that has runners
- 125 Newark's county
- 126 Creator of Sneetches
- 127 "The Notebook" actor Gosling

Down

- 1 Cotton ball applications
- 2 Oodles
- 3 Rob of "Class" (1983)
- 4 They get lit around Christmas
- 5 What yeggs crack
- 6 Part of Miss Muffet's diet
- 7 D-Backs, on scoreboards
- 8 PC alternative
- 9 Answered a charge
- 10 Daisylike bloom
- 11 Manifests
- 12 Some sorority women, informally

- 13 "... ____ saw Elba"
- 14 Blu-Ray buy
- 15 Montague's rival
- 16 "SNL" alumna Cheri
- 17 Color similar to olive
- 18 Off the mark
- 24 Vocal Arts subject at Julliard
- 29 Form of iron oxide
- 30 Banderillero targets
- 32 Rest of the group
- 33 Grammar class topic
- 36 "SOS" pop group
- 37 Speakeasy bust, say
- 38 Early Bond foe
- 40 Flying biter
- 42 Strads that are straddled
- 43 One more time
- 45 "____ a Kick Out of You"
- 46 Uncluttered
- 47 Turn outward, as the foot
- 48 Canon and Xerox competitor
- 50 Coral groups
- 51 Seething
- 52 Violet cultivar
- 56 Moo
- 59 Consecrated
- 61 Pairs
- 62 Stage name of singer Richard Melville Hall
- 63 Test for M.A. hopefuls
- 64 Palm, e.g.
- 65 Head covering
- 66 Copier cartridge content
- 67 "Be True to Your School", for one
- 68 Lab dish inventor
- 69 Ruhr valley city
- 72 Anvil-striking sound
- 73 Throng
- 74 Young newt
- 75 In plentiful amounts
- 76 Freshly
- 77 State with St. Olaf and Saint Paul Colleges: abbr.
- 80 Paul Bunyan's ox
- 81 Went astray
- 82 Pouting look
- 83 Bookie's ratio
- 84 Forks over
- 86 Baseball Commissioner Emeritus Bud
- 88 Ribbonlike decoration
- 90 Not safe to eat
- 92 "A Fatal Gift" author Waugh
- 93 High church feature?
- 95 Springfields and Enfields
- 98 Peaks
- 99 Sandbar
- 100 Do the Thanksgiving honors
- 102 One in a black suit
- 103 Allergen in some gloves
- 105 Footless creatures
- 106 Awards stars, maybe
- 108 Latin 101 verb
- 109 Masterwork
- 110 They may be fried ova easy?
- 112 As agile as ever
- 113 "Three Sisters" sister
- 114 Marxist theorist Trotsky
- 118 Mesabi Range deposit
- 119 "Animal House" frat Delta ____ Chi

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THE APPROVAL MATRIX

Our deliberately oversimplified guide to who falls where on our taste hierarchies.

HIGHBROW



The State Department is forced to issue a **"worldwide travel alert."** Happy holidays!



Masked men **stole 17 artworks** from the Verona museum, including five Tintoretto's and a Reubens.



Wait, wait, don't tell me why young people don't listen: NPR worries that its demo keeps getting **older**.



The **overlooked** Italian artist Nanda Vigo's exhibit tucked away upstairs in Sperone Westwater gallery.

The view from the **onstage** seating at *A View From the Bridge*.



At least 300 people sat through all five nights of Berlin Philharmonic's **Beethoven binge** at Carnegie Hall.

Democrats, Camilla Nielsson's **mesmerizing** doc about trying to create a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe.



Mark Gerrard's play *Steve* may be the **gayest** tragicomedy since *The Boys in the Band*.



Stoned, Aja Raden's history of **gems** that changed history.

Those **fake** White Student Unions.

Vatican puts journalists **on trial** for doing their jobs.



According to the World Economic Forum, women won't catch up to men in their pay until **2133**.



Do Wim Wenders film fans really want to wear **3-D glasses** in the theater?



The nifty *High Line* book, by its architects (slow-walking throngs of tourists **not included**.)



Jeff Bezos-funded BE3 **reusable space rocket** lands vertically for the first time, just like in 1950s sci-fi movies.

The eco-royals! The U.K.'s Prince Charles notes how climate change **fuels** the Syria conflict ...

... And Sweden's King Gustav bemoans the energy inefficiency of **bath-taking**.



J.W. Anderson won **both** menswear and womenswear designer of the year at the BFAs (a first).

Desperate-to-please emails to their corporate masters surface from Coke-funded **obesity "researchers."**



The petty **connivory** of ex-State Senate majority leader Dean Skelos and son.

DESPICABLE



The West Coast feels the **pinch** of the Dungeness-crab toxicity crisis.

Noted medical expert **Jenny McCarthy's** fear-mongering about HIV.



The Walking Dead tried to fool us into thinking **Glenn died** ...

Consumer Reports tests meat for "superbugs" and finds them in 83 percent of turkey samples. Hope you had a **nice Thanksgiving!**



St. Marks Place **without** Trash and Vaudeville.

Nola the northern white rhino **dies** in the San Diego Zoo; now there are only three left.

E! cancels *The Soup*. Who will bear **snarky** witness to obscure reality-TV shows now?



The short-lived and **best forgotten** Nazi-themed subway promo for *The Man in the High Castle*.

If you buy your baby this **cocktail-shaker-shaped rattle**, that fact will eventually come up when the baby ends up in rehab.

Customers **can't stop tipping** at Danny Meyer's restaurants, despite the ban.



Of course you can buy a *Tyrannosaurus rex*-shaped **menorah** on Etsy.



Marc Jacobs's dog, Neville, **gives back**, helping Puerto Rican rescue dogs.



'Tis the season for the **glitter beard**.



Chvrches's video for "Empty Threat" makes being teen goths at a water park look like the most **fun** thing ever.



The New York Botanical Garden's holiday train show will make you **forget about Penn Station**.



Naked, naked, naked Miley.



The transporting **fantasia** of Alé Abreu's animated *The Boy and the World*.



Joseph Gordon-Levitt's surprisingly **credible** Janet Jackson on *Lip Sync Battle*.



Carly Rae Jepsen's cover of Wham's "Last Christmas" (circa the year of her **birth**).

Fetty Wap shows shoppers—not **strippers**!—at a Jersey mall with \$2,700 in cash.



BRILLIANT

LOWBROW

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